# Zatoichi

HIROSHI HIRATA

ÉDITIONS DELCOURT

# Zatoichi

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Drawings and scenario : **HIROSHI HIRATA**
Original work : **KAN SHIMOZAWA**

Adapted from the original movies*
Zatoichi's Vengeance (Scenario : Hajime Takaiwa)
Zatoichi's Pilgrimage (Scenario : Kaneto Shindo)


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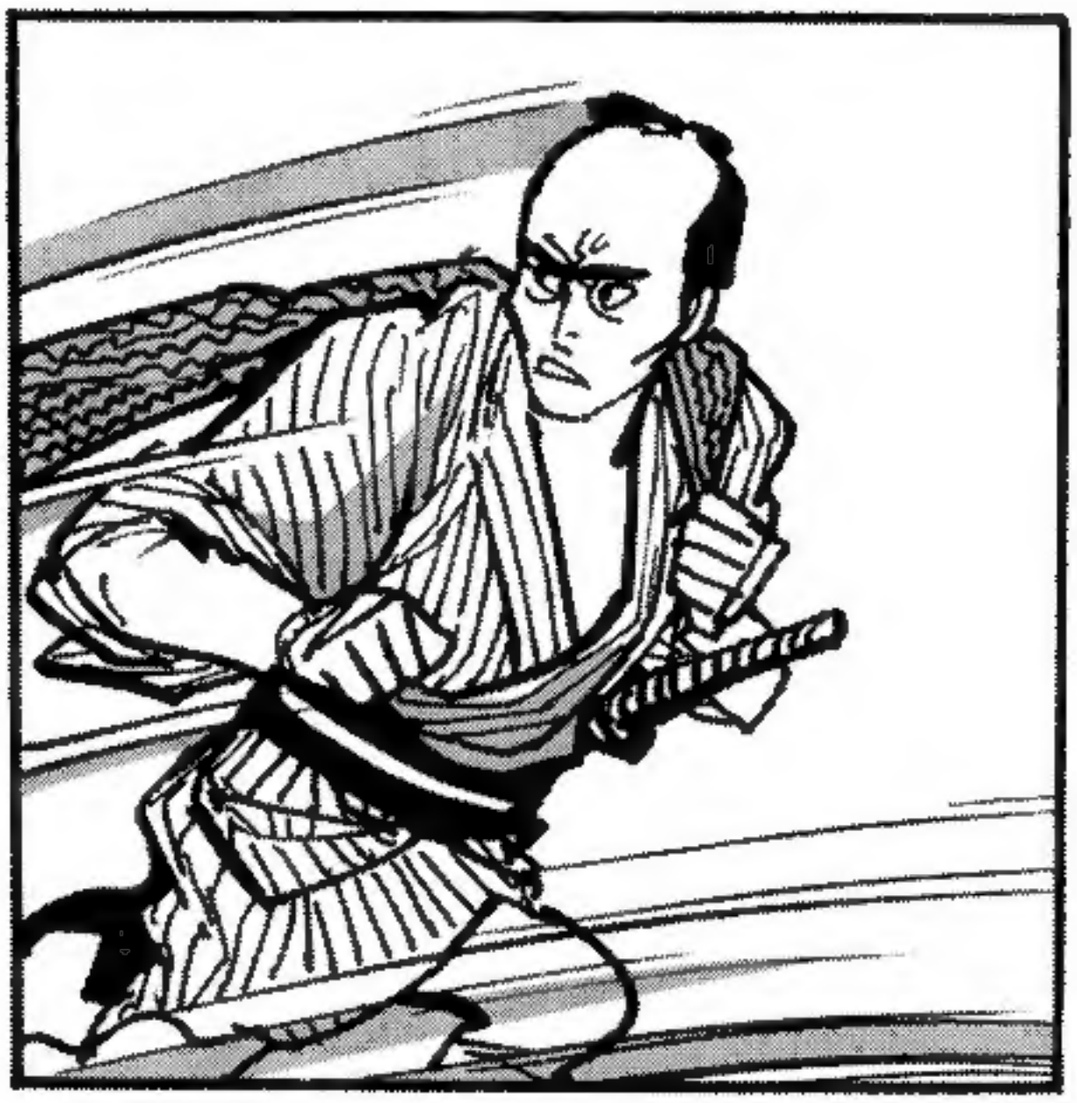
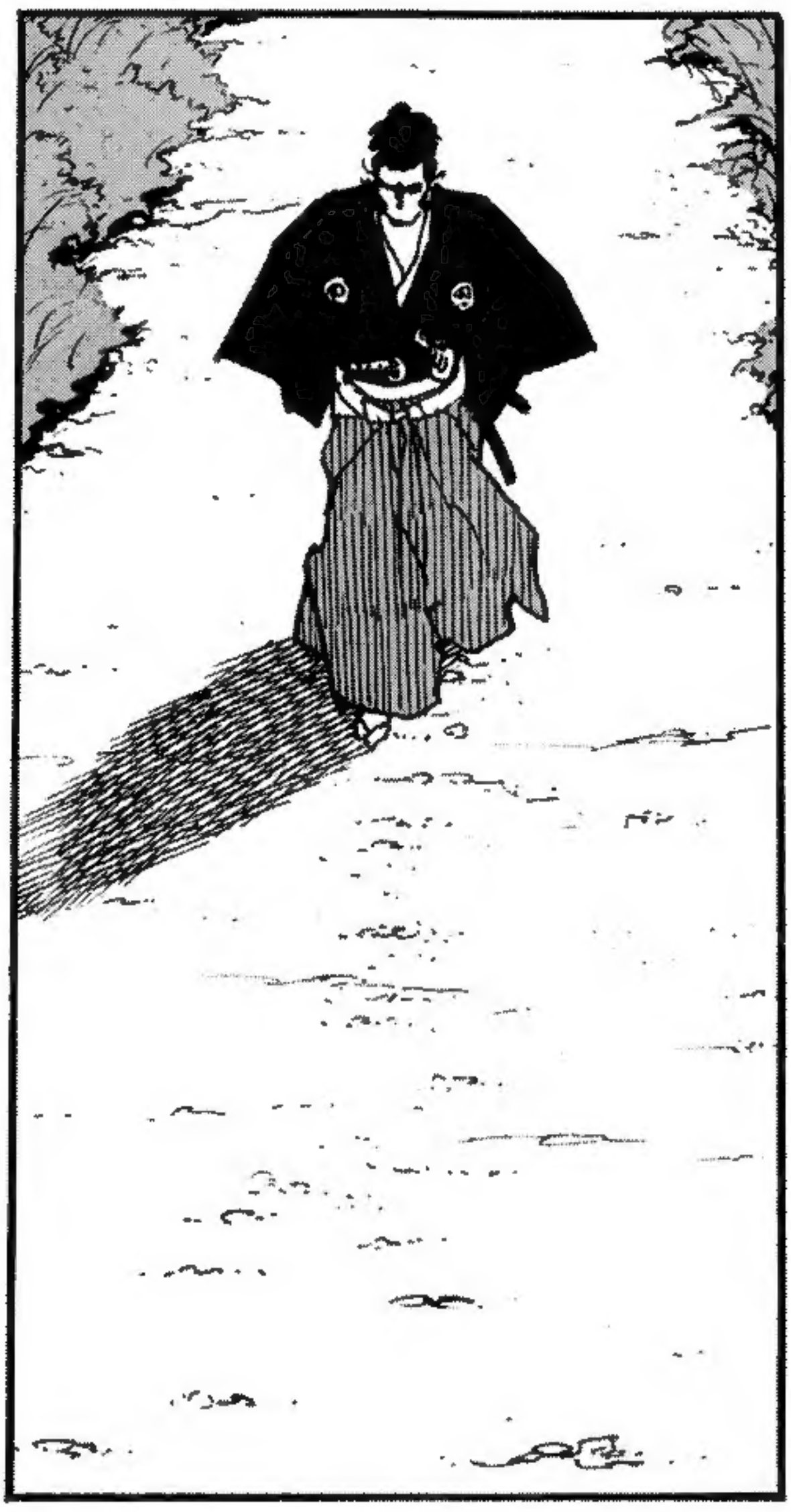
*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zatoichi

# THE BALLAD OF ZATOICHI

MASTER!

AH!
NO DOUBT,
THAT'S HIM!





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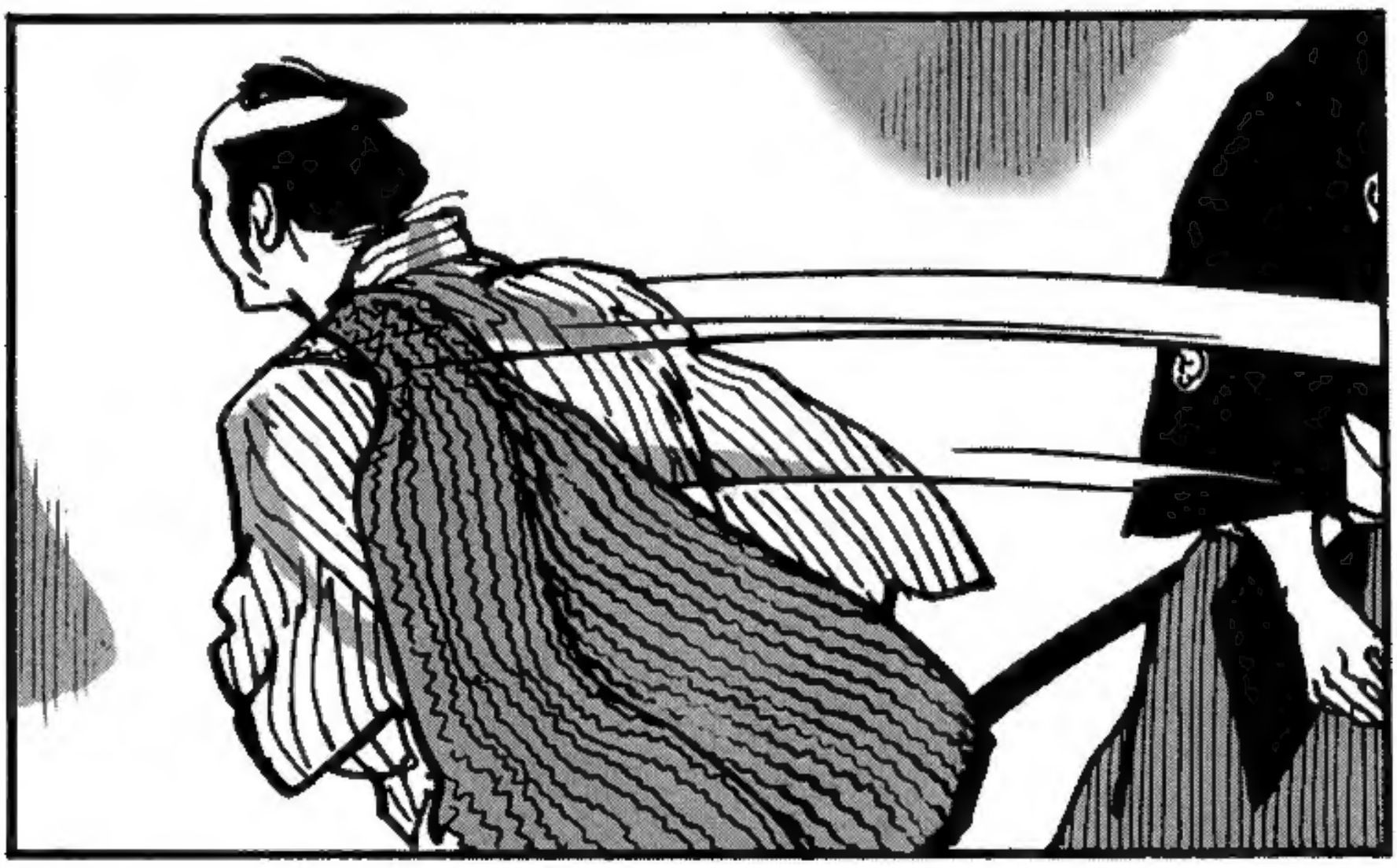
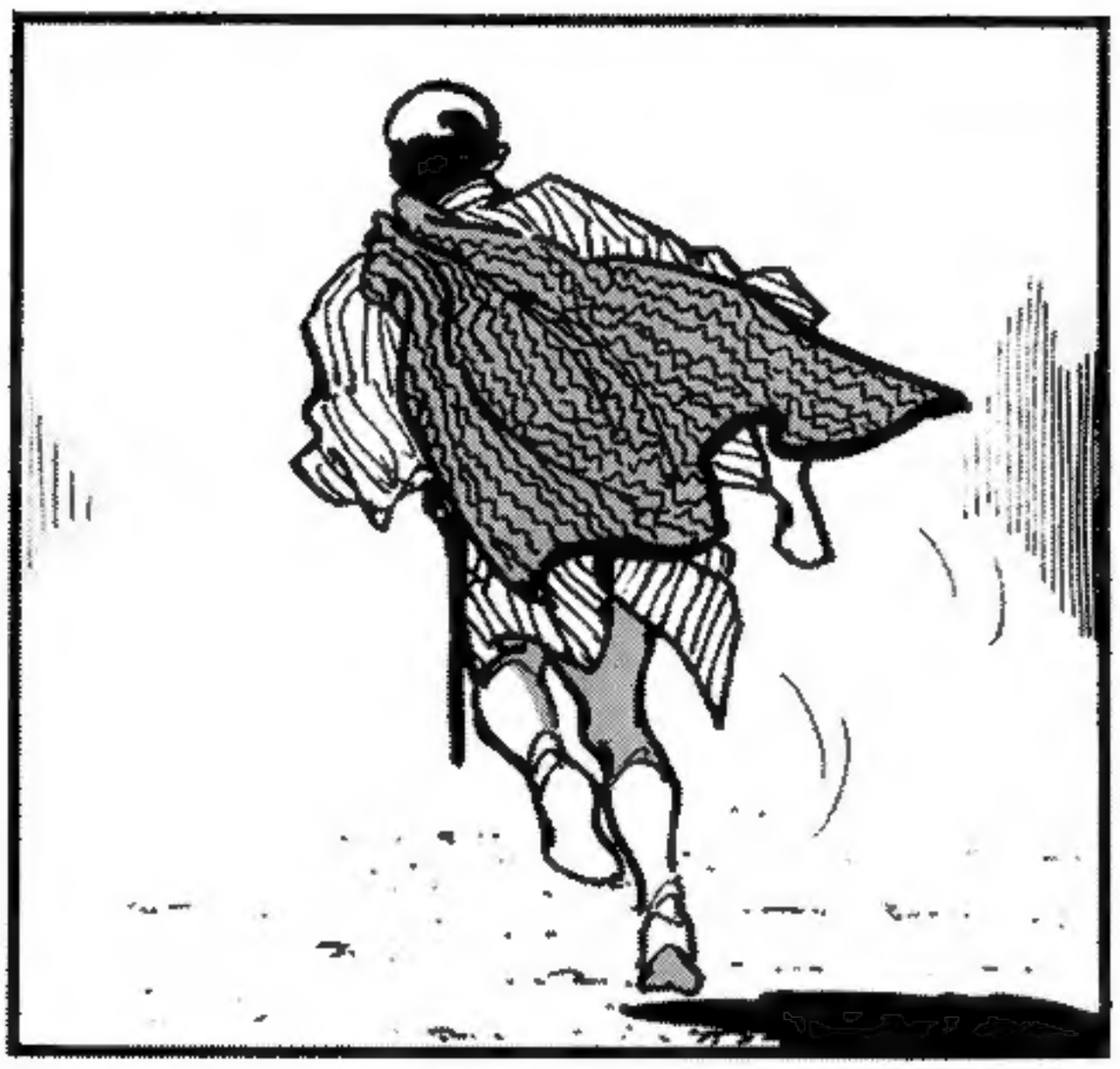
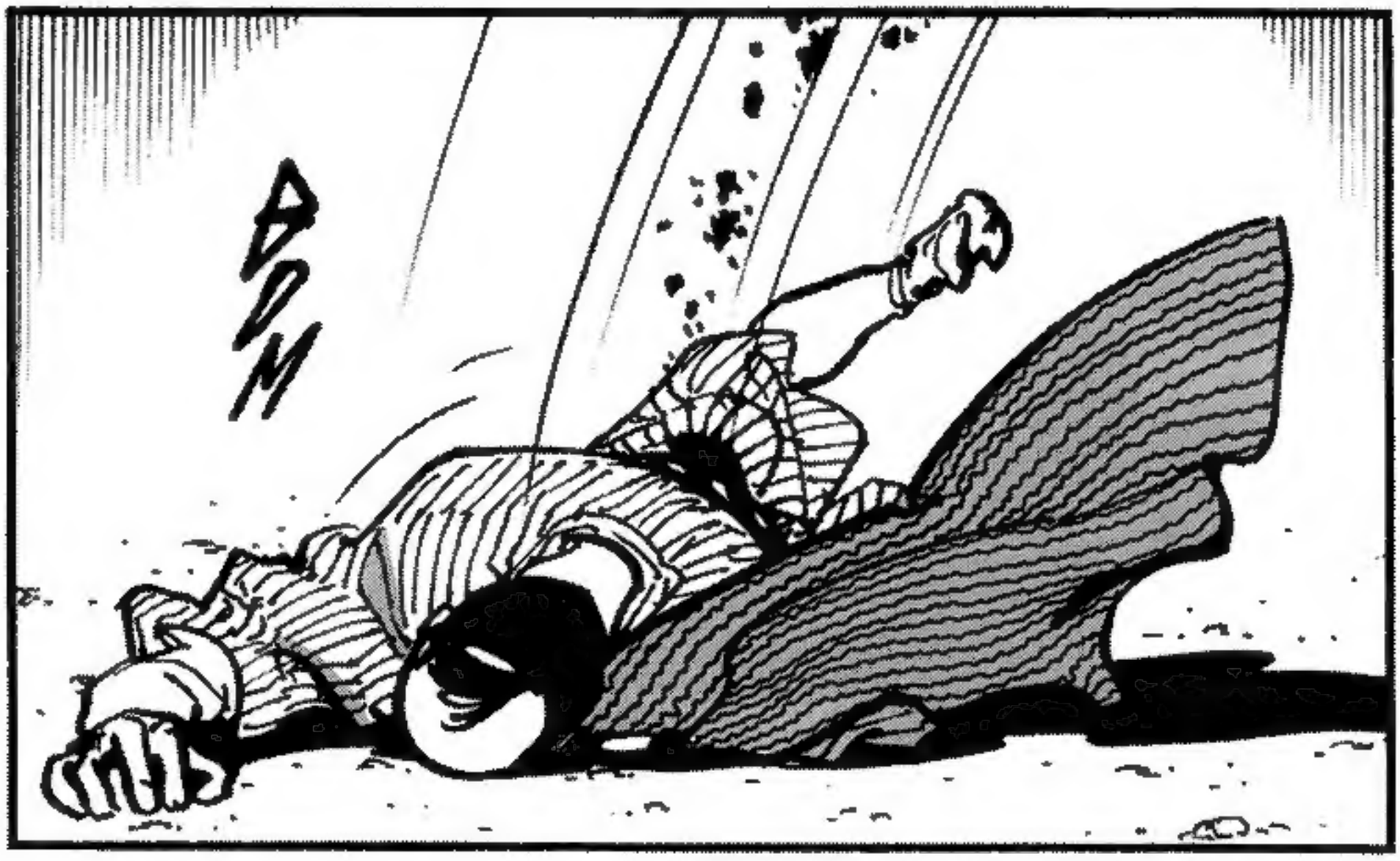
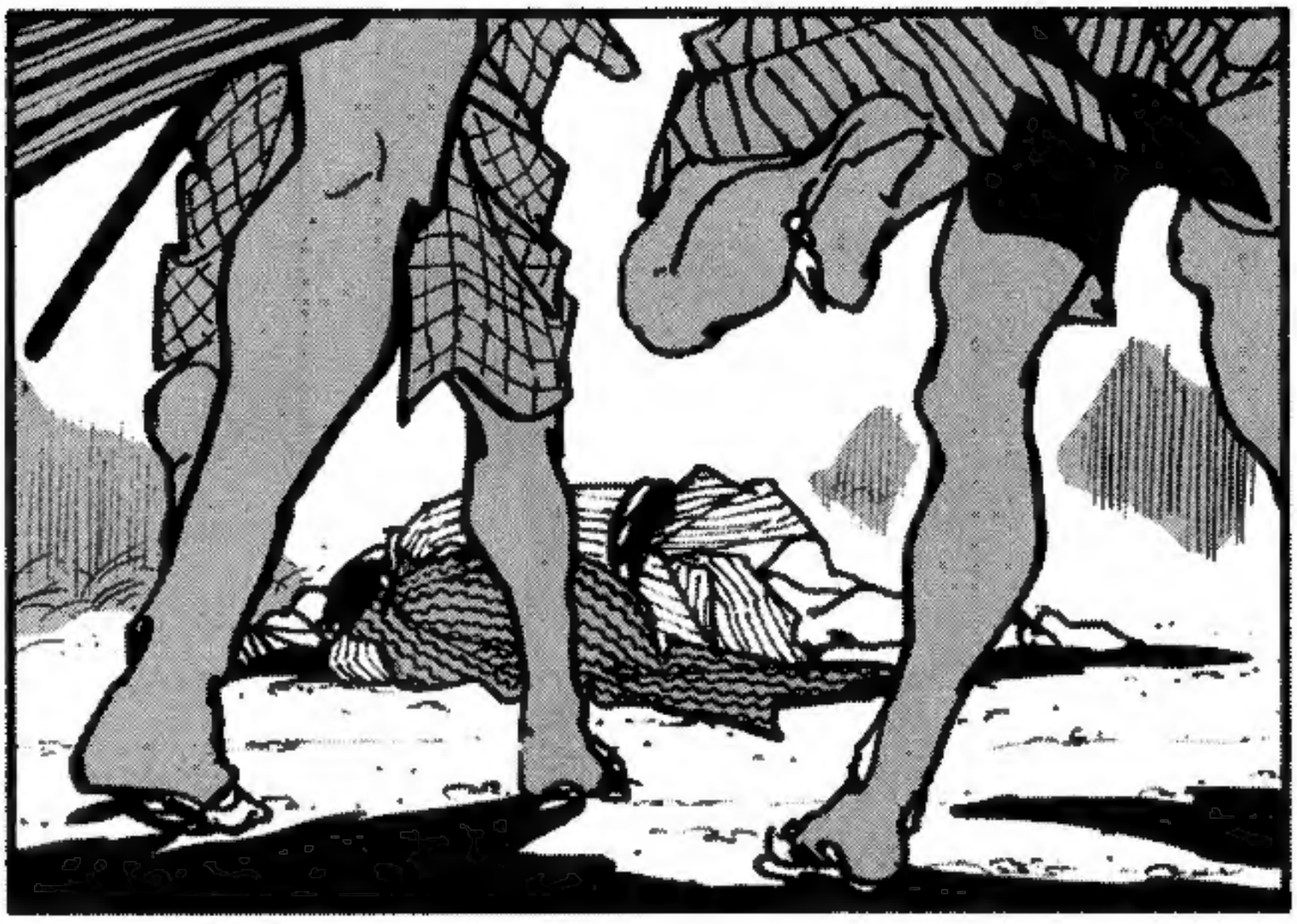


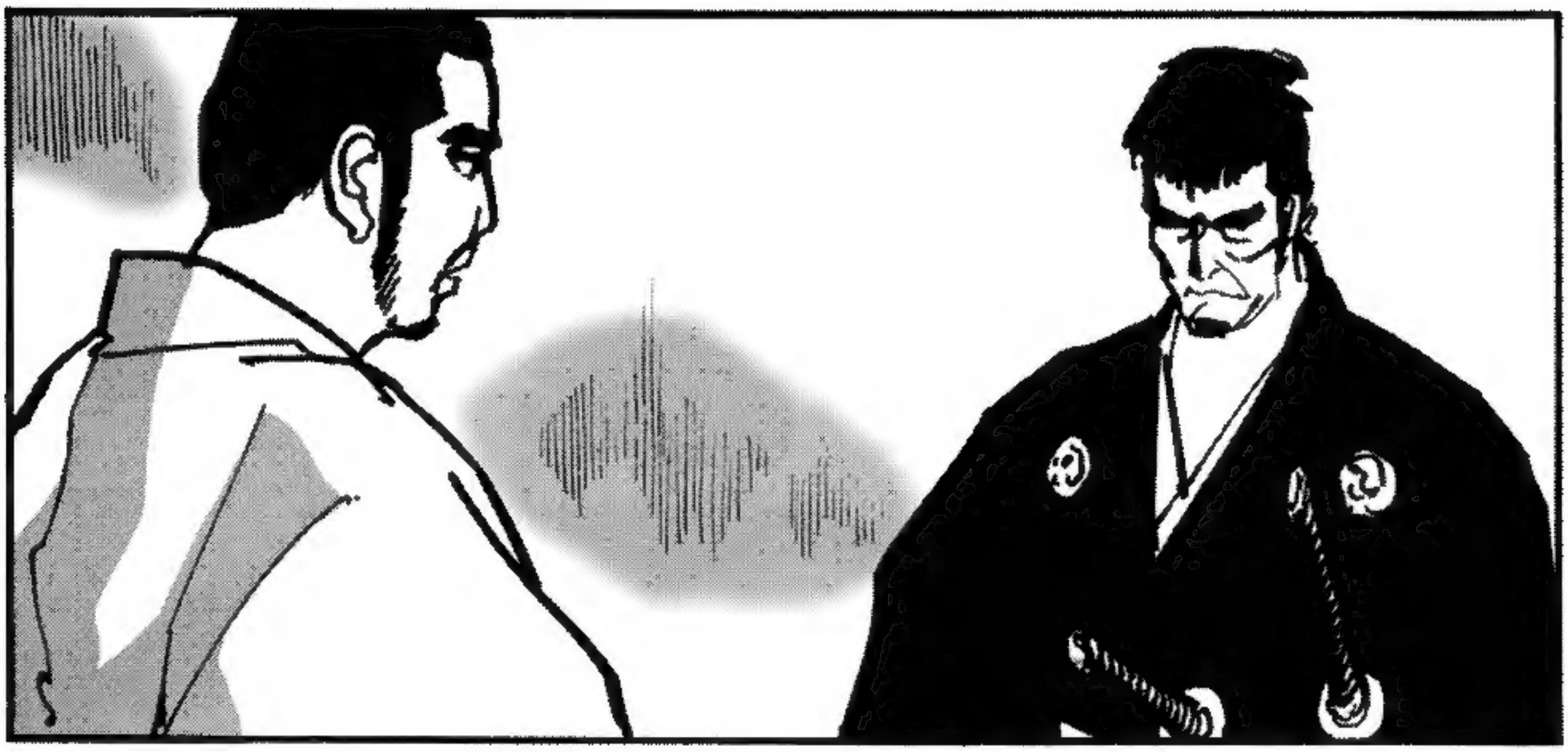
ZZAF
SNAP





COME ON!
HE'S DONE
WITH HIM!





ZAN

HURRY UP AND DIE!

WHAT?! WHO'S HERE?!
IT'S NOT HONORABLE TO STEAL OTHERS' GOODS...

WHAT?!
AMONGST THIEVES, RASCALS LIKE YOU ARE THE MOST DESPICABLE!

HEHE...ANYWAY, THERE'S ONLY DARKNESS LEFT FOR BLIND MEN!!

LEAVE THE REGION BEFORE TONIGHT OR ELSE...!

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, YOU DAMN MASSEUR!

BOM

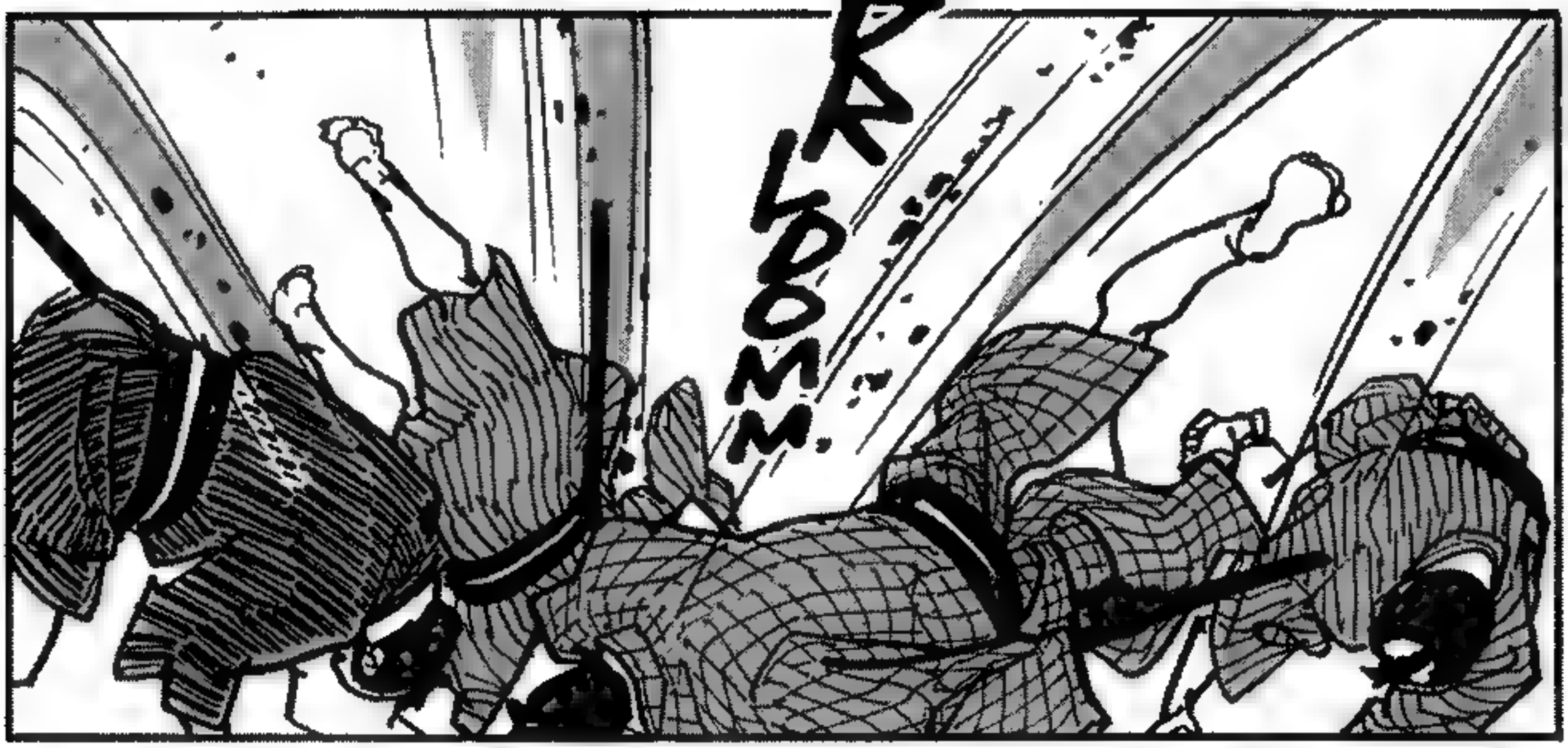
WAIT A MOMENT!

YOU BLIND BASTARD!

HOW DARE YOU?!

ZZZAF
AF

SCHRAC


KRAKOOM

WHAC

TAH

AH!

CAN YOU HEAR ME?

HEY! WHAT...

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

MISTER...

PROBABLY THE MAN...THAT I ENCOUNTERED...

A SINGLE SWORD STRIKE! THE WORK OF A MASTER...

TA... TAICHI...

GIVE THIS...TO TAICHI...

MY... MY NAME IS... TAMEKICHI.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

Huh?

MISTER!

Euh...

WHAT?

TON

Ah!

Mm... HE'S DEAD...

THAT MAN TOLD ME HIS NAME WAS TAMEKICHI...

THERE MUST BE TWO HUNDRED RYO*, MAYBE THREE...

THIS PURSE IS WELL-LINED...

HOW AM I GONNA FIND THAT PERSON?

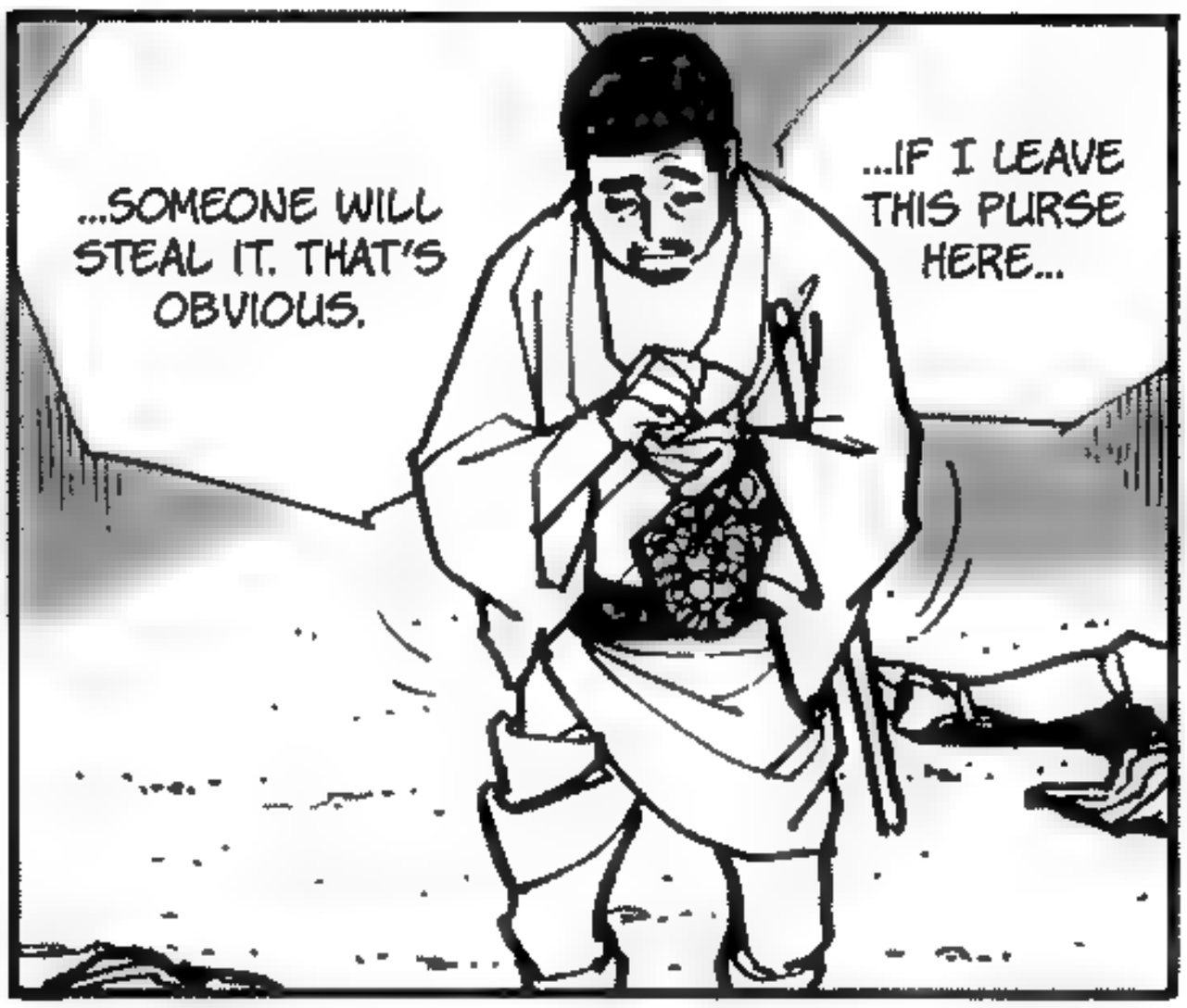
AND HE SPOKE ABOUT A CERTAIN... TAICHI...

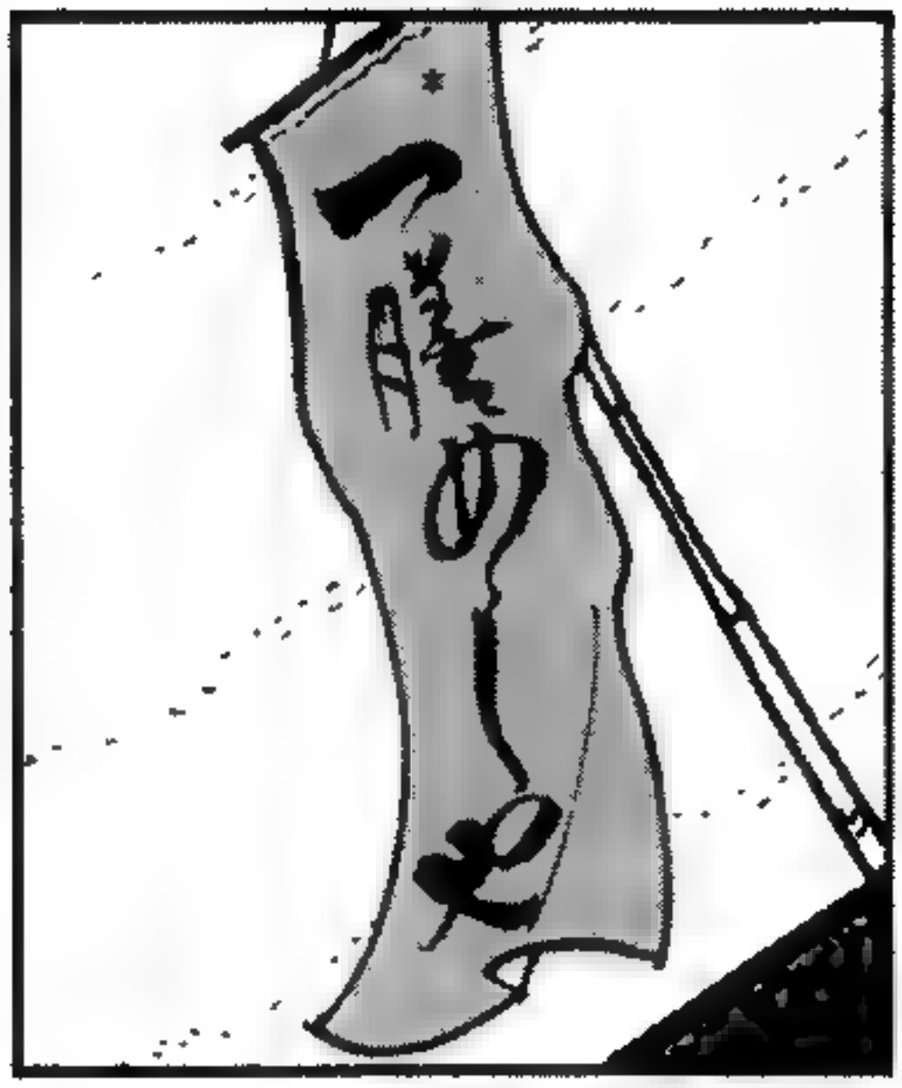
WHATEVER, A DEAD BODY DOESN'T NEED MONEY...

...

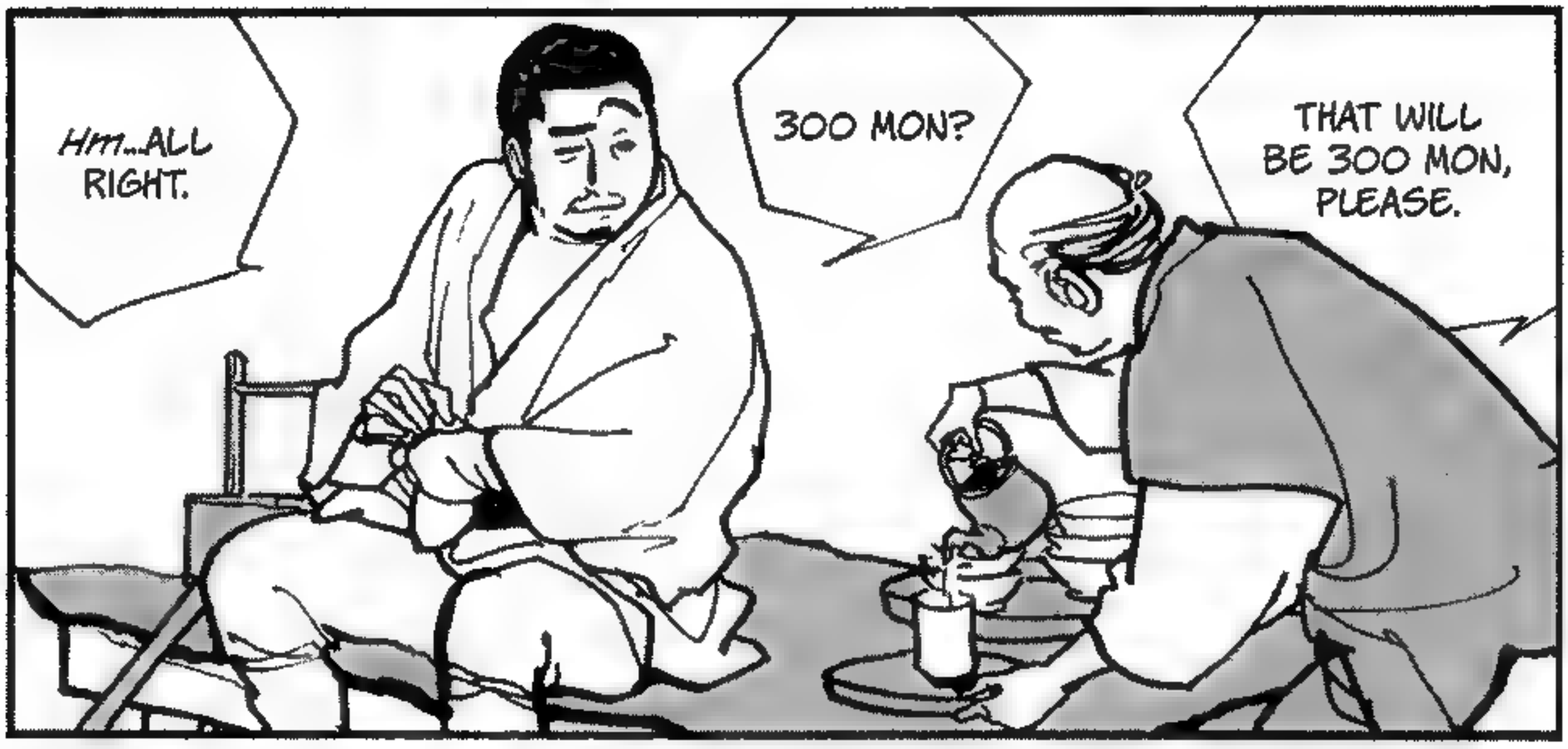
* 1 "RYO" = 4000 "MON" COINS = 4 "KAN" COINS = 50 "MOMME" (SILVER WEIGHT, 3.75 GRAMS OR 0.13 OZ.) = 6.5 OZ (OF GOLD, IDEALLY)

THEN I'LL JUST GO AND TAKE IT WITH ME.


...SOMEONE WILL STEAL IT. THAT'S OBVIOUS.
...IF I LEAVE THIS PURSE HERE...



* SOUP AND NOODLES



POP

I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE. I HAVE TO USE A LITTLE BIT OF THIS MONEY.

Ah... THANK YOU.

Huh...SOMETHING FELL FROM YOUR PURSE!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH... AND HAVE A NICE DAY!

KEEP THE CHANGE!

...A DIE?!

THOSE RASCALS FOUND OUT THAT THE MAN HAD CHEATED. THEY ORDERED SOMEONE TO KILL HIM TO GET THEIR MONEY BACK.

HA HA... I GET IT!

PTUH

HOW LUCKY, FOR SUCH A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY TO FALL INTO MY HANDS... WITHOUT ANY STRINGS ATTACHED!

THEN I CAN USE THIS MONEY WITHOUT ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. NOBODY WILL CLAIM IT.

WHICH PATH TO CHOOSE...

THE ROAD HAS DIVIDED INTO TWO...

Ah!

...WHICH ONE OF THESE TWO PATHS IS THE MAIN ROAD?

EXCUSE ME...WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME...

ME TOO.

I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, BUT I'M BLIND, SO...

HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE? I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT.

YES. I'M BLIND TOO.

WHAT?

I WAS BORN BLIND WHEREAS YOU, YOU WEREN'T... AM I WRONG?

HA HA HA

HA HA! WHAT A COINCI-DENCE!

COME ON...ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE BLIND?

...

I THINK YOU MUST HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE UNTIL THE AGE OF...FIVE OR SIX.

*Ah*, I UNDER-STAND...YOU'RE AN ITINERANT "BIWA* BONZE", AREN'T YOU?

*Hm*...SINCE I HAVE YOUR PERMIS-SION...

COME CLOSER AND SEE FOR YOUR-SELF.



* THE BIWA IS A JAPANESE SHORT-NECKED FRETTED LUTE, AND A CLOSE VARIANT OF THE CHINESE PIPA. THE BIWA IS THE CHOSEN INSTRUMENT OF BENTEN, GODDESS OF MUSIC, ELOQUENCE, POETRY, AND EDUCATION IN JAPANESE BUDDHISM.

IT'S STRANGE... YOU HAVE A CALLUS AT AN UN-EXPECTED PLACE ON YOUR INDEX FINGER.

I'M A MASSEUR. THIS IS HOW I EARN MY LIVING.

WHEREAS YOU...*hm*... YOUR HANDS ARE STRONG AND YOUR FINGERS BIGGER THAN THE AVERAGE.

I NOTICED BECAUSE YOU ONLY REALIZED THAT I WAS HERE WHEN YOU STOPPED WALKING.

YOUR SENSES LOOK REALLY SHARP BUT YOUR BEHAVIOR IS NOT THAT OF A "REAL BLIND MAN."

HOW DID YOU GUESS THAT I WASN'T BORN BLIND?

I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU SOMETHING IF YOU DON'T MIND...

...

AS FOR ME, I ALREADY KNEW THAT YOU WERE HEADING THIS WAY EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE YET 100 METERS AWAY FROM HERE...

I MAY BE AN INVALID...BUT I HAVE THE SAME NEEDS AS THE ABLE-BODIED!

MY PLEASURE.

WOULD YOU INVITE ME TO LUNCH?

TO TELL THE TRUTH... I'M DYING FROM STARVATION.

YES? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

AH? AND... HOW AM I DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS?

YOU KNOW, I'VE ALREADY MET MANY OTHER BLIND MEN. BUT...I'VE NEVER MET SOMEONE OF YOUR KIND.

WHEREAS PEOPLE WHO CAN SEE OBVIOUSLY TREAT YOU LIKE AN INVALID...

LET'S JUST SAY THAT YOU'RE PARTICULAR. YOU DON'T FEEL THINGS LIKE THE OTHER BLIND MEN. YOU MUST FRIGHTEN THEM AND I'M SURE THEY AVOID YOU...

YES. I THINK WE CAN SAFELY PUT YOU IN THE FREAK CATEGORY.

AN "AMBIGUOUS MAN"?!

IN CONCLUSION, YOU'RE NEITHER A BLIND MAN NOR ONE WHO CAN SEE! YOU'RE AN AMBIGUOUS MAN.

WELL...I'M NOT DOING IT SO PEOPLE WILL LAUD ME TO THE SKIES EITHER.

*Hah!* YOU SURE DON'T BEAT AROUND THE BUSH! DON'T FORGET THAT I'M THE ONE PAYING!

ALL RIGHT THEN... I'LL ALLOW MYSELF TO ASK YOU SOMETHING. WHAT SHOULD I DO TO BE WELCOMED AMONGST THE BLIND MEN?

EATING FEEDS THE STOMACH AND TALKING FEEDS THE HEART.

*HA HA HA!* EATING AND TALKING ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS...

COWARDICE IS A FEELING THAT REINFORCES THE SURVIVAL INSTINCT IN MOST PEOPLE...

WHAT DID YOU SAY?! A COWARD?! BUT...

WELL... YOU'LL HAVE TO BECOME A COWARD.

COWARDICE IS THE ONLY WAY FOR BLIND MEN TO BEAT THEIR ENEMIES.

SIGHTED PEOPLE ARE RATHER INCLINED TO ATTACK OTHERS BY THEMSELVES WHEREAS BLIND MEN DEFEND THEMSELVES ABOVE ALL.

IT DOESN'T MATTER. ANYWAY, THAT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU WILL UNDERSTAND, NOT WITH YOUR HEAD.

...I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU MEAN!

SO...IF I BECOME A COWARD, I'LL NEVER BE BEATEN? I'M SORRY, BUT...

...

WHATEVER, THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL!

Ah... AND, HOW IS IT, THAT STOPPING PLACE?

I'M GOING TO THE ICHI-NO-MIYA STOP.

WHICH WAY ARE YOU HEADING NOW?

THE "THUNDER DRUMS"... IT SOUNDS INTERESTING.

BUT THERE'S AN ANNUAL FEAST STARTING TOMORROW. IT'S CALLED THE "THUNDER DRUMS;" IT'S A MAJOR EVENT IN THE REGION.

PEACEFUL, CALM... IT'S A GREAT PLACE.

ALL THOSE DRUMS START RESONATING IN UNISON AT THE SIGNAL FROM THE SHINTO TEMPLE'S DRUM OF NUKISAKI.*

ALL THE SHOPKEEPERS OF ICHI-NO-MIYA OWN DRUMS THEY'VE BOUGHT TOGETHER. THERE'S A DRUM PER THREE OR FOUR HOMES.

IT'S NOT A MERE DISTRICT FEAST. DON'T THINK YOU WILL SEE HEALTHY YOUNG PEOPLE HITTING A HUGE DRUM, FOREHEADS GIRDED WITH TWISTED HEADBANDS.

COME ON! A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL COME TO THAT FEAST. I'M SURE THAT YOU WILL GATHER MORE MONEY THAN YOU USUALLY DO!

THAT, I CAN'T KNOW IN ADVANCE.

I SEE. YOU'RE GOING THERE ONLY TO FILL YOUR PURSE, AREN'T YOU?



* SHINTO TEMPLE OF NUKISAKI : THAT FAMOUS TEMPLE IS 4000 YEARS OLD AND IS ACTUALLY LOCATED IN THE TOWN OF TOMIOKA (GUNMA AREA)

WHETHER THE PASSERS-BY LISTEN TO ME OR NOT, I DON'T CARE. IT'S THE SAME FOR MONEY; MY NEEDS ARE SMALL. I RECEIVE ALMS FROM PEOPLE JUST WHEN I NEED IT... THAT'S WHY MY PURSE IS ALWAYS EMPTY.

I PLAY BIWA SIMPLY FOR MY PLEASURE...

*HA HA!* WELL. I HAVE TO GO NOW...

NOW TELL ME WHO'S THE STRANGEST BETWEEN US TWO!

I THINK I'M GONNA COME WITH YOU... AT LEAST UNTIL ICHI-NO-MIYA.

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稲荷神社

AH!

BAM

STAY HERE, COWARDS!

HEY, CAN'T YOU WATCH WHERE YOU'RE WALKING, YOU CACK-HANDED IDIOT?!

OW!

Hahaha... IT'S NO BIG DEAL.

AH! I'M SORRY, MISTER. I DIDN'T SEE THAT...

YOU LOOK FULL OF ENERGY, KID!

*PFFF!* THEY REALLY ARE COWARDS, EVERY ONE OF THEM!

HURRY UP! GET IN THE HOUSE AND CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES!

*OHH*, TAICHI! YOUR KIMONO IS DIRTY AGAIN!

YOU'RE REALLY A BLOODY RASCAL!

*CAFE

...YOUR GRAND-SON'S NAME IS TAICHI, RIGHT?

YES. HE'S JUST A LITTLE ROGUE!

Huh?! YOU KNOW TAMEKICHI?

WOULD TAICHI'S FATHER'S NAME BE TAMEKICHI BY ANY CHANCE?

PARDON MY INDISCRETION, BUT...

Euh...Haha! WELL...IN FACT, TAMEKICHI-SAN ALWAYS ORDERS ME A MASSAGE SESSION.

EXCUSE ME?

UNBELIEVABLE... IT MUST BE THE GODS WHO'VE LEAD ME TO THIS HOUSE!

WHAT ?

AND WHERE IS MY SON RIGHT NOW?

REALLY ?

ATSUTA? IN OWARI'S FIEF*?

Euh... ATSUTA. YES, TAMEKICHI IS AT ATSUTA!

THIS TEA IS HOT!

Euh, YES.

FHHH!

* OWARI'S FIEF . WEST SIDE OF THE ACTUAL AICHI DISTRICT.

HE MUST BE CAUSING TROUBLE AS USUAL.

WHAT'S HE DOING? WELL... HE...

WHAT'S MY FATHER DOING THERE?

AH?! REALLY ?

BUT... THAT'S WHAT HE'S DONE, MADAM!

HE WOULD BE A PROFESSIONAL COOK IF HE HAD CONTINUED HIS VOCATIONAL TRAINING...

REALLY? I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT...

AND HE'S THE CHEF NOW.

YES. HE WAS HIRED BY A FAMOUS RESTAURANT.

HE WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO COME BACK BEFORE A WHILE. FOR NOW, THE RESTAURANT CAN'T OPEN ITS DOORS IF HE'S NOT THERE, SO...

*Hm*...YES... ABOUT THAT...

SAY, MISTER... WHEN IS MY FATHER COMING BACK TO SEE US?

TAICHI, YOU HAVE TO BE A GOOD BOY BECAUSE YOUR FATHER WILL COME BACK ONE DAY... *Ah!* THERE'S ALSO SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT I HAVE TO GIVE TO YOU...

*Pff!* THAT'S UNFAIR!

WHAT IS IT?! MONEY?! HE'S GIVING ME MONEY?!

TAME-KICHI-SAN ASKED ME TO GIVE IT TO YOU.

HERE IT IS. THIS PURSE IS ALL YOURS, MADAM.

...

*Oh,* THANK YOU! THANK YOU, TAMEKICHI!

BUT... THERE'S A REAL FORTUNE IN THERE!

*LEAVE ME ALONE! I'M SICK OF SEEING YOU COME HERE EVERY DAY TO ASK ME THIS!*

*THAT'S ENOUGH, DUMBASS! I'M NOT HERE TO LISTEN TO YOUR WHINING! JUST TELL US THE TRUTH; WILL YOU PAY US OR NOT?!*

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

IT'S A CERTAIN GONZO AND SOME GUYS FROM HIS FAMILY: YAKUZA FROM ITABANA ...

HEY, KID! DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?

*Hah!* WE'D PREFER TO SETTLE THIS WITHOUT DOING ANY HARM, MADAM!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?! HOW DARE YOU RAISE YOUR HAND AGAINST AN OLD MAN?!

CROOKS OF THEIR KIND HAVE NOTHING TO DO HERE!

WHAT MISERY! THOSE MEN ARE REAL VILLAINS!

...FROM ITABANA?

*Mm*, OKAY... THAT MUST BE WHY THOSE BANDITS TRY TO SETTLE IN YOUR TOWN. THEY'D BE FREE TO DO WHATEVER THEY WANT...

YES, THIS WAS TRUE UNTIL NOT LONG AGO. EVEN LORD HASSHU** AND HIS PATROLS ONLY COME ONCE A YEAR.

BUT... SOMEONE TOLD ME THAT THIS TOWN WAS FULL OF PEACEFUL PEASANTS WITHOUT ANY YAKUZA*...

WE'VE ALL REFUSED, OF COURSE! WE TOLD THEM THAT WE'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOREVER AND THAT THIS RIGHT IS PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

*Oh*, UNFORTUNATELY, THEY'RE NOT JUST SETTLING HERE... THEY BLACKMAIL EIGHT SHOPKEEPERS OF THIS TOWN TO "BUY" THE RIGHT TO KEEP ON DOING THEIR WORK!

WHAT IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR! THAT GONZO IS A GODDAMN BANDIT!

SO THAT GONZO DEVIL, ALONG WITH HIS DOGS BODIES, STARTED BREAKING THINGS IN OUR SHOPS. HE'S ATTACKED PEOPLE, YELLING EVERYWHERE THAT HE IS THE MASTER OF ICHI-NO-MIYA FROM NOW ON!



* HERE, THE "YAKUZA" WORD IS USED IN ITS ORIGINAL MEANING: OUTLAW.
** LORD HASSHU. PEACEKEEPER OF THE VILLAGES FROM THE EIGHT FIELDS (HASSHU) OF THE KANTO REGION.

NO, BUT I HEARD THAT HE INFORMED ALL THE YAKUZA FAMILY BOSSES FROM THE MAIN ROAD THAT HE HAD A NEW TERRITORY UNDER HIS PROTEC-TION!

AH, KAMEGORO-SAN! DID THAT BLOODY GONZO COME TO SEE YOU TOO?

DAMN IT! AND... WHERE DOES HE PLAN ON SETTLING ALL HIS MEN?! KAMEGORO-SAN, WE MUST BE STRONG! EVEN WITH ALL THOSE HARASSMENTS, SOME OF US HAVE BRAVELY REFUSED TO PAY!

HE EVEN PLANS ON DOING A BIG CARD PLAY TOMORROW AFTERNOON! HERE, IN ICHI-NO-MIYA!

WELL... I'VE FUL-FILLED MY MISSION.

MADAM, I HAVE TO GO...

AH?! YOU'RE LEAVING ALREADY?

I DON'T WANT TO BOTHER YOU, REALLY.

STAY A LITTLE LONGER! YOU'VE COME FROM SO FAR AWAY TO GIVE ME NEWS FROM MY SON. WHAT WILL THE OTHERS THINK OF ME IF I DON'T WELCOME YOU TO AT LEAST ONE NIGHT AT MY HOUSE?!

I'D LIKE TO, BUT...

THAT'S TRUE! WHY DON'T YOU ENJOY IT AND REST FOR A WHILE?

GRANDMA! THE DRUMS FEAST IS ABOUT TO START!

YES, LET'S GO TOGETHER TO THE FEAST!

YOU WANNA GO... WITH ME?

COME ON, MISTER! LET'S GO TOGETHER!

賽前神社

COME ON! LET'S GET A CLOSER LOOK!

*SHINTO TEMPLE OF NUKISAKI.



賽前神社

奉

DRUMS ALL OVER THE TOWN WILL ANSWER THE TEMPLE'S!

BOOM

IT COMES FROM A HOUSE NEARBY.

THAT'S IT! THEY'RE STARTING!

DOOOON

DOOOOOOON

IT COMES FROM OVER THERE TOO!

Ah!

DOO DON DOON

Wah! IT'S GETTING LOUDER!

DOO DON DOON

AND ALSO THERE!

BBBBBB
BBBBBB
DODON
DODON
DODON
DODON

WAIT!

Ghh!

WHAT'S WRONG, MISTER?

Aah...

MISTER!

YES...MY EARS HAVE REPLACED MY EYES IN A WAY. AND THEY'RE MUCH MORE SENSITIVE THAN THOSE OF ORDINARY PEOPLE.

YOUR EARS HURT, RIGHT?

Bla bla

Ha ha ha...

Ah, I'M SORRY! I'M A BLIND MAN AND... I DIDN'T SEE YOU...

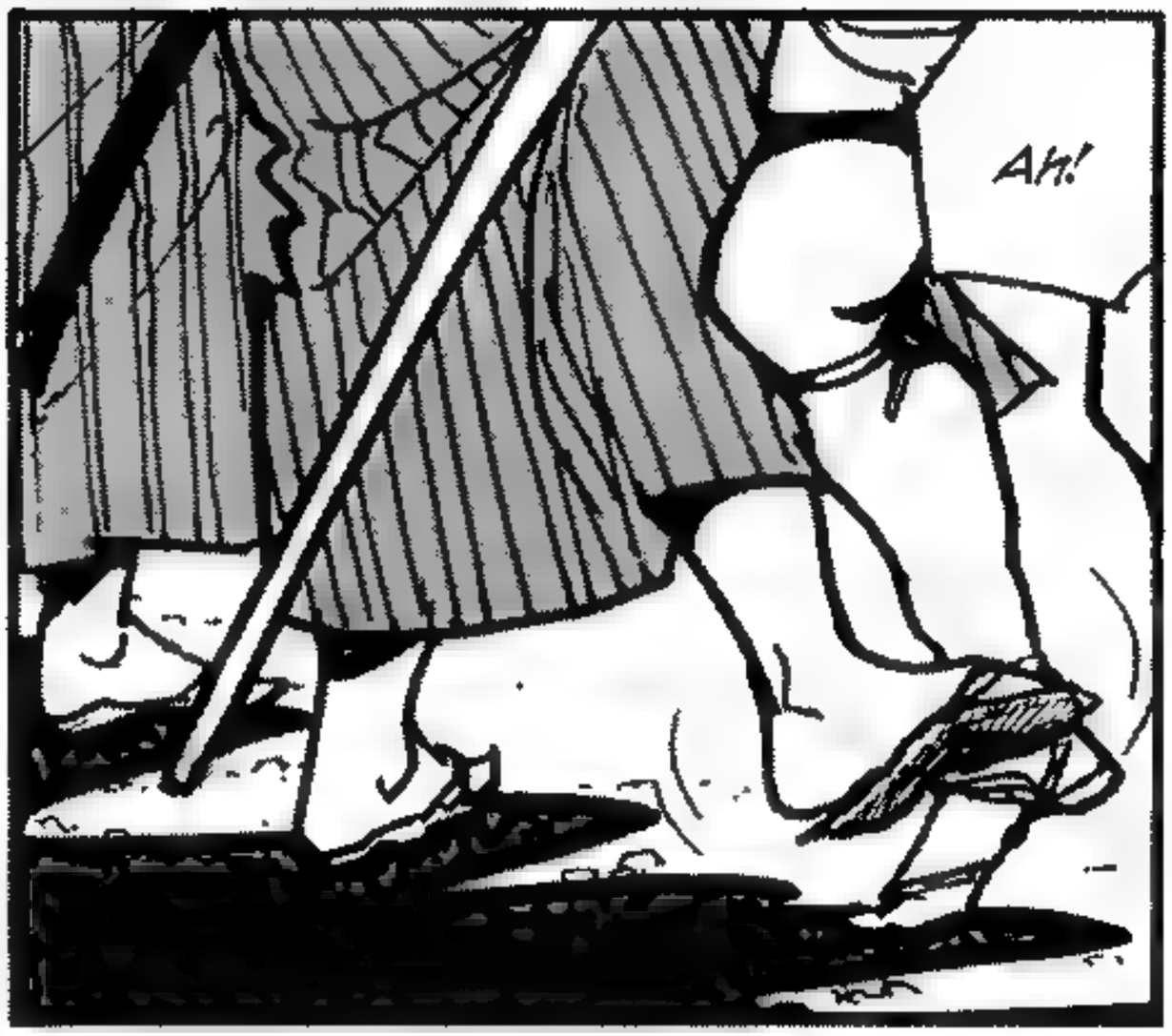
HEY! THAT'S MY FOOT YOU'VE JUST HIT, IDIOT!

OW!

COME ON, KID... LET'S GO.

I APOLOGIZE FOR BEING SO CLUMSY.

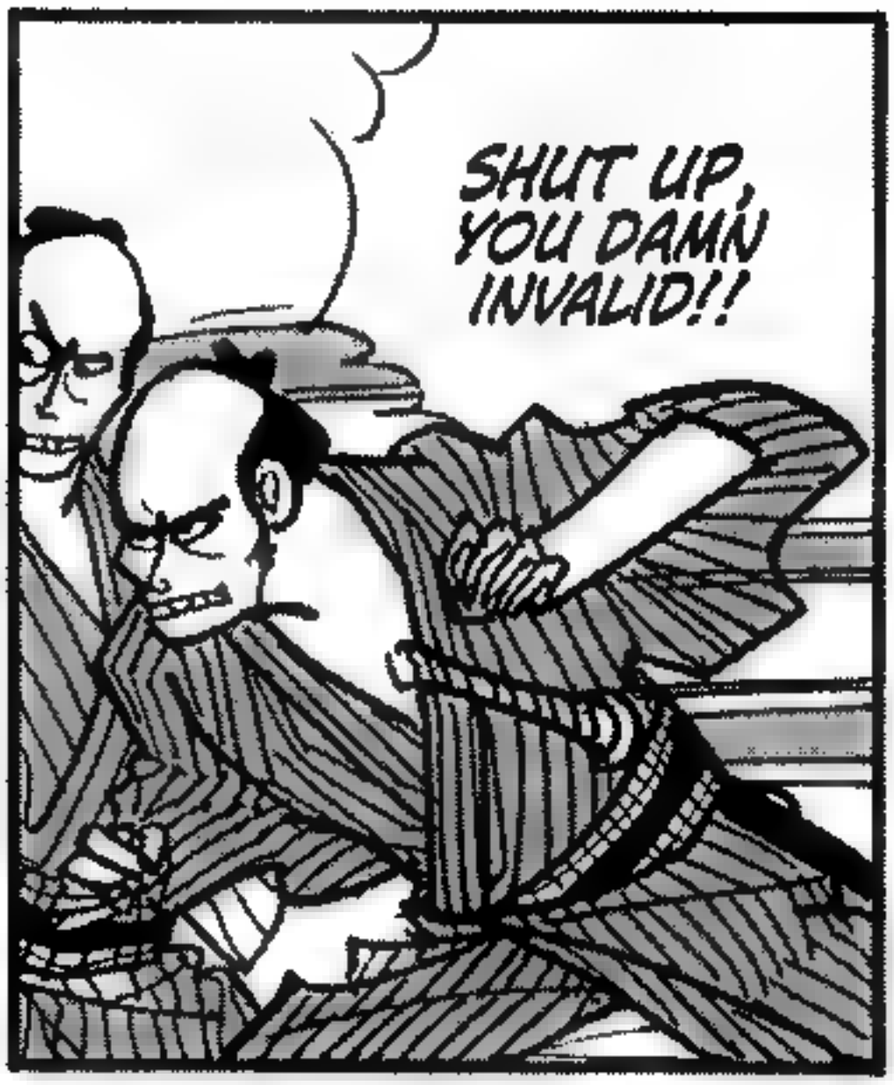
Ah? YOU'RE BLIND?

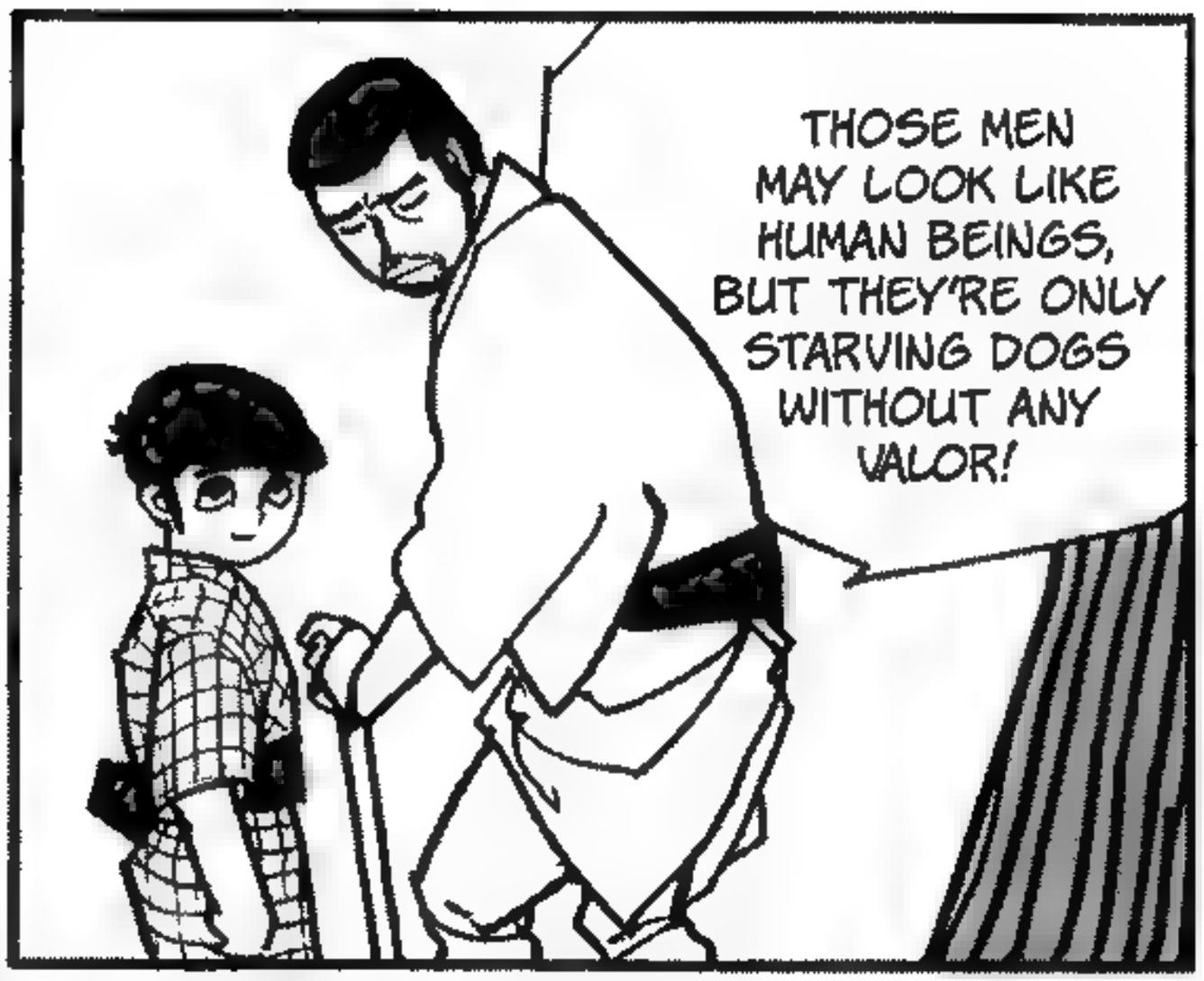

AH!

MISTER!
Ha ha ha ha ha!

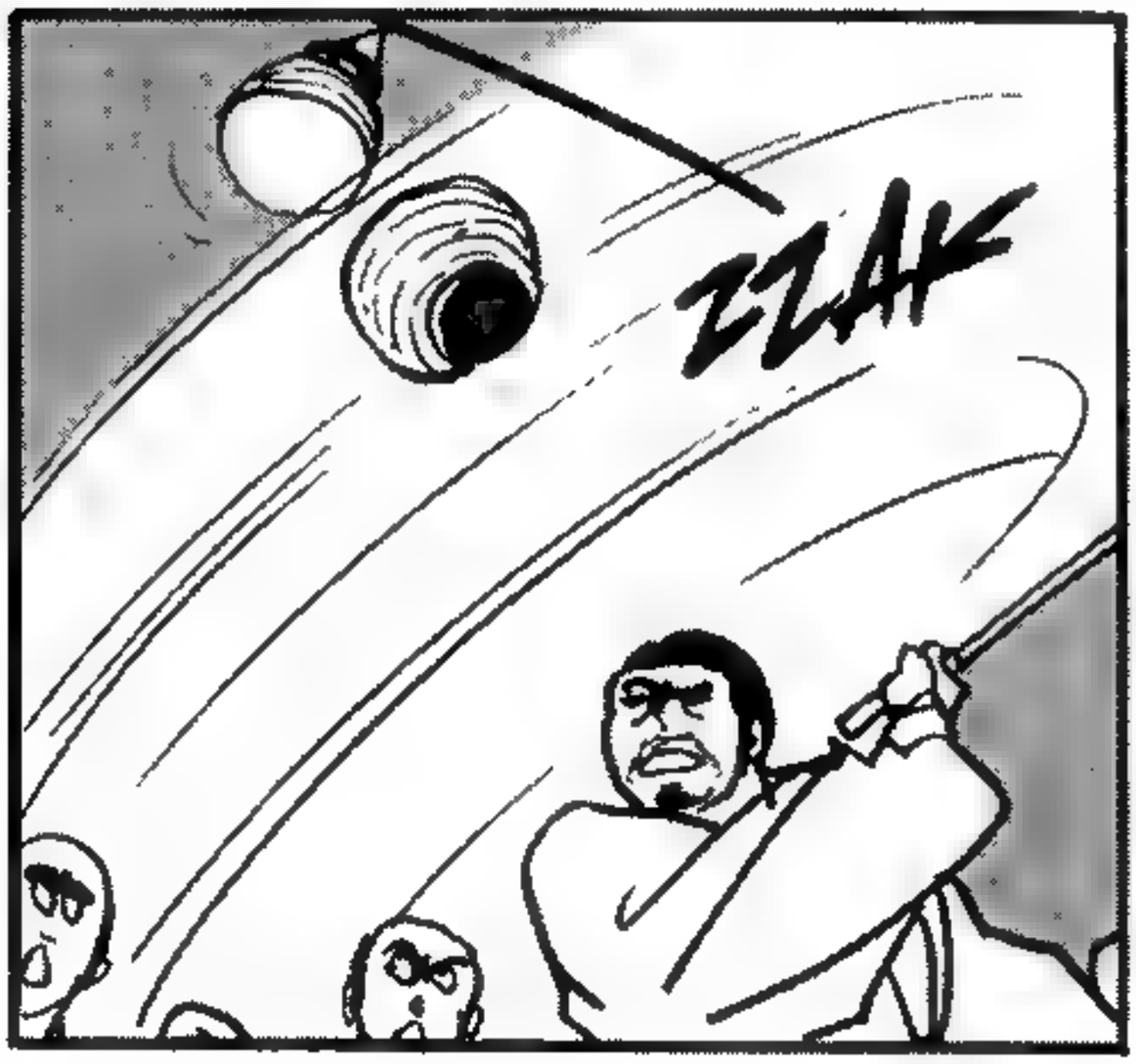
HUH?! WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

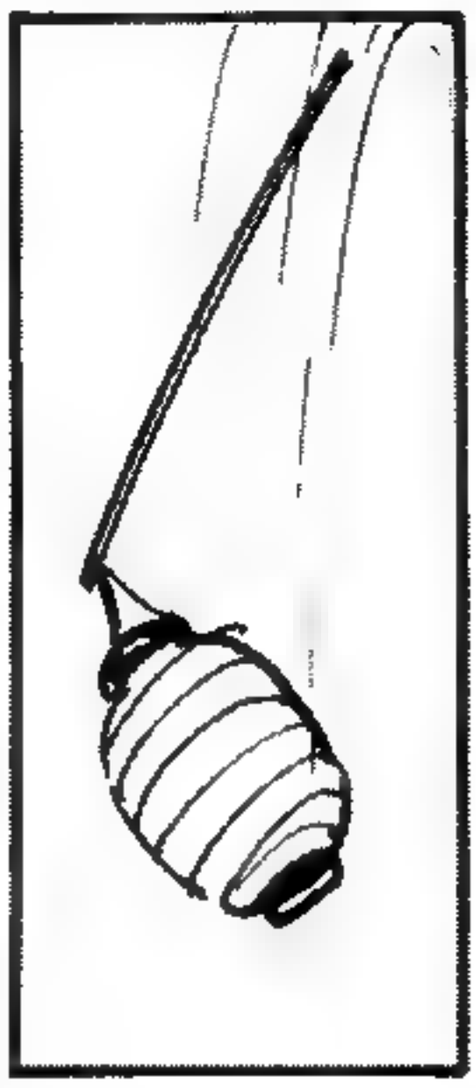
YOU SEE, KID...WHEN YOU'RE A GROWN UP, DON'T LOWER YOURSELF BY MAKING FUN OF AN INVALID. IT'S INDICATIVE OF STUPIDITY.

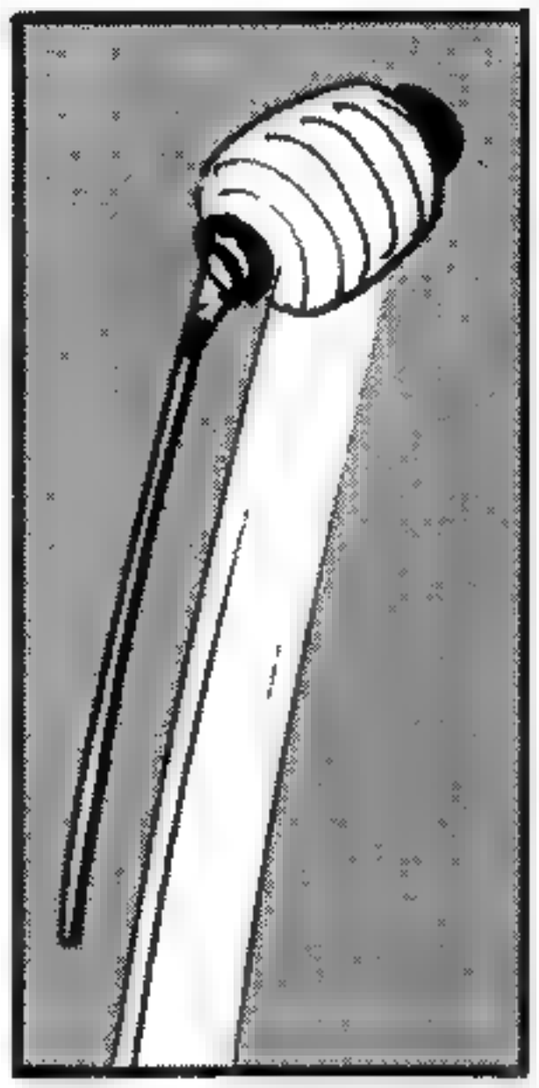

SHUT UP, YOU DAMN INVALID!!


THOSE MEN MAY LOOK LIKE HUMAN BEINGS, BUT THEY'RE ONLY STARVING DOGS WITHOUT ANY VALOR!

Ah!
Eurk!


ZZAK





ZZAH

Ooh!

AOF

HOP

THOSE ARE THE FEATURES OF A STINKY AND DESPICABLE MAN... SOMEONE YOU DON'T WANNA KNOW IN MY OPINION.

LOOK CAREFULLY, KID! THAT'S NOT THE FACE OF A MAN, IS IT?

COME ON, FOLLOW ME.

ATTACK ON!

THAT MAN IS NOT A MERE MASSEUR...

NO!

I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM!

IT BURNS!

*Haha...I'VE BEEN LUCKY ABOVE ALL.*

YOU'RE REALLY STRONG, MISTER!

YOU KNOW, I DON'T LIKE BOTHERING PEOPLE...

MY GRANDMOTHER TOLD ME THAT YOU COULD SPEND THE NIGHT AT OUR HOUSE. WILL YOU ACCEPT?

AND YOUR WALKING STICK... IN FACT, IT HIDES A SWORD!

NO!

Hmm... WELL, OKAY.

AND MY GRANDMOTHER WILL BE GLAD TOO...STAY, PLEASE!!

I BEG OF YOU! I'LL BE REASSURED IF THERE'S A STRONG MAN STAYING AT OUR HOUSE.

PROMISE ?

YES.

YOU'LL BE BACK AFTER THAT?

YES.

I HAVE TO GO AND FIND CUSTOMERS FIRST. OTHERWISE, I WON'T BE ABLE TO PAY FOR MY MEALS. DO YOU UNDERSTAND, KID?

...

OKAY. THEN I'LL WAIT FOR YOU HERE.

THAT GUY FROM ITABANA, GENZO, IS OBVIOUSLY MAKING THE INHABITANTS OF THIS VILLAGE SUFFER BY HARASSING THEM. UNFORTUNATELY, I'LL HAVE TO CUT DOWN SEVERAL PEOPLE IF I MIND HIS BUSINESS, THAT'S FOR SURE! I'M SICK OF ALL THIS VIOLENCE!

DAMN...I CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT MEETING LOW-CLASS BANDITS.

OR...IS IT TAMEKICHI'S SOUL THAT BROUGHT ME TO THIS VILLAGE TO RESTORE ORDER?

MAYBE I SHOULD GET OUTTA HERE AFTER EARNING SOME MONEY...

*HELLO!* WHO NEEDS A MASSAGE? MASSAGE!

WELL...I'VE ALREADY USED THREE RYO AND A BU* FROM THE PURSE. I DON'T FEEL ANY REMORSE SINCE THAT MONEY WAS DISHONESTLY EARNED! BUT STILL...

* AROUND 625 EURO.

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!

STOP!

THIS VIOLENCE IS USELESS!

AH, SHUT UP!

YOU CAN'T DO THIS!

WHAM

MY WIFE'S SICK. LEAVE HER ALONE!

IT'S COMING FROM KAMEGORO'S HOUSE.

WHAT'S ALL THAT NOISE?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Oh!

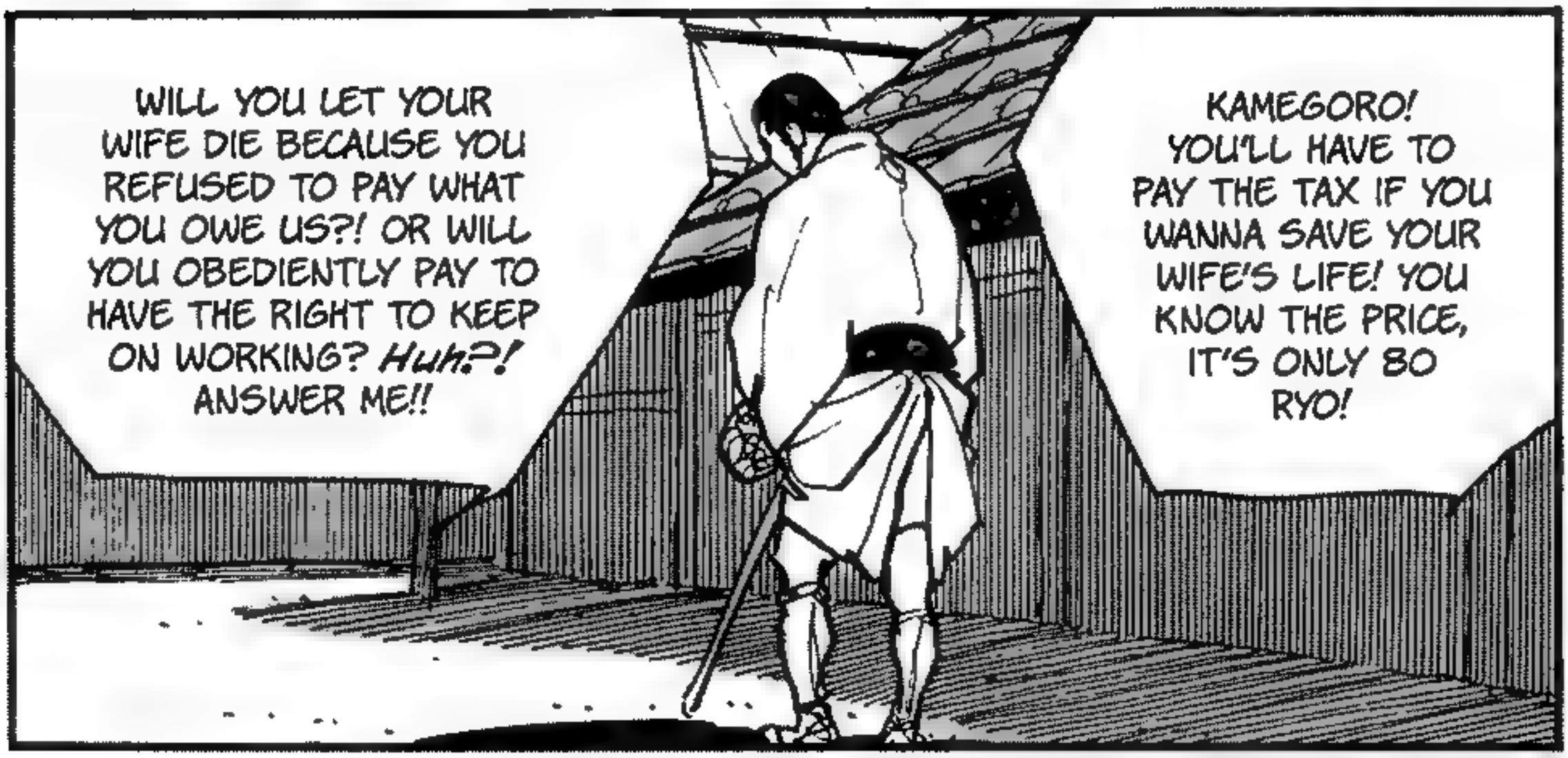
REALLY? NOW IT'S KAMEGORO'S TURN TO BE PESTERED.

IT MUST BE GONZO'S GANG.

SHUT THE HELL UP!

I BEG OF YOU, DON'T HURT MY WIFE! SHE'S WEAK AND COULD DIE!

SAAP


WILL YOU LET YOUR WIFE DIE BECAUSE YOU REFUSED TO PAY WHAT YOU OWE US?! OR WILL YOU OBEDIENTLY PAY TO HAVE THE RIGHT TO KEEP ON WORKING? Huh?! ANSWER ME!!
KAMEGORO! YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY THE TAX IF YOU WANNA SAVE YOUR WIFE'S LIFE! YOU KNOW THE PRICE, IT'S ONLY 80 RYO!

COME ON! YOU CAN STILL BORROW MONEY FROM YOUR FRIENDS!
BUT... I WON'T BE ABLE TO GATHER SUCH A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY!

GIVE ME MY WIFE BACK!

THIS IS RIDICULOUS! I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO DO IT!

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, OLD HAG!

STOP NOW! GIVE HIM HIS WIFE BACK!

HA HA... OKAY THEN, WE'LL START THE BEATING WITH YOU. YOU'LL REGRET STEPPING INTO MY BUSINESS, OLD WOMAN!

ARE YOU REALLY MEN TO DARE TO TREAT PEOPLE LIKE THIS?

THAT POOR GIRL MIGHT DIE IF YOU DON'T STOP HURTING HER!

AND LISTEN TO ME CARE-FULLY ...

WAIT A MOMENT! STAY WHERE YOU ARE!

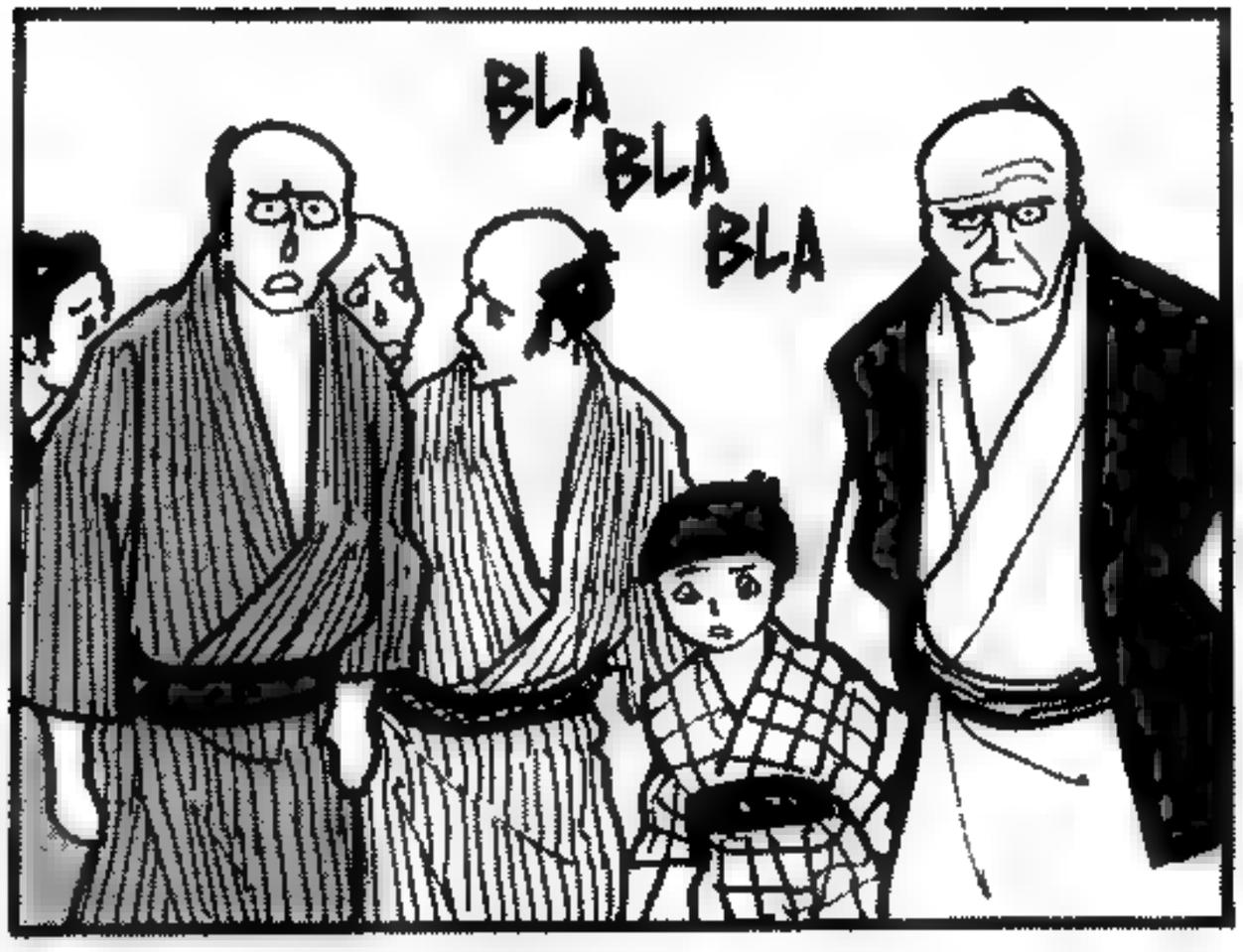
*Huh?* WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?

MAKING INVALIDS, THE SICK, OR OLD PEOPLE SUFFER IS AN EVIDENT MARKING OF LISTLESSNESS! YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A BUNCH OF FILTHY PIGS!

IT'S YOU!! THE BLIND MASSEUR FROM EARLIER!!

*Ah!*

BE CAREFUL, MISTER!


BLA BLA BLA


CUT HIM INTO PIECES, GUYS!

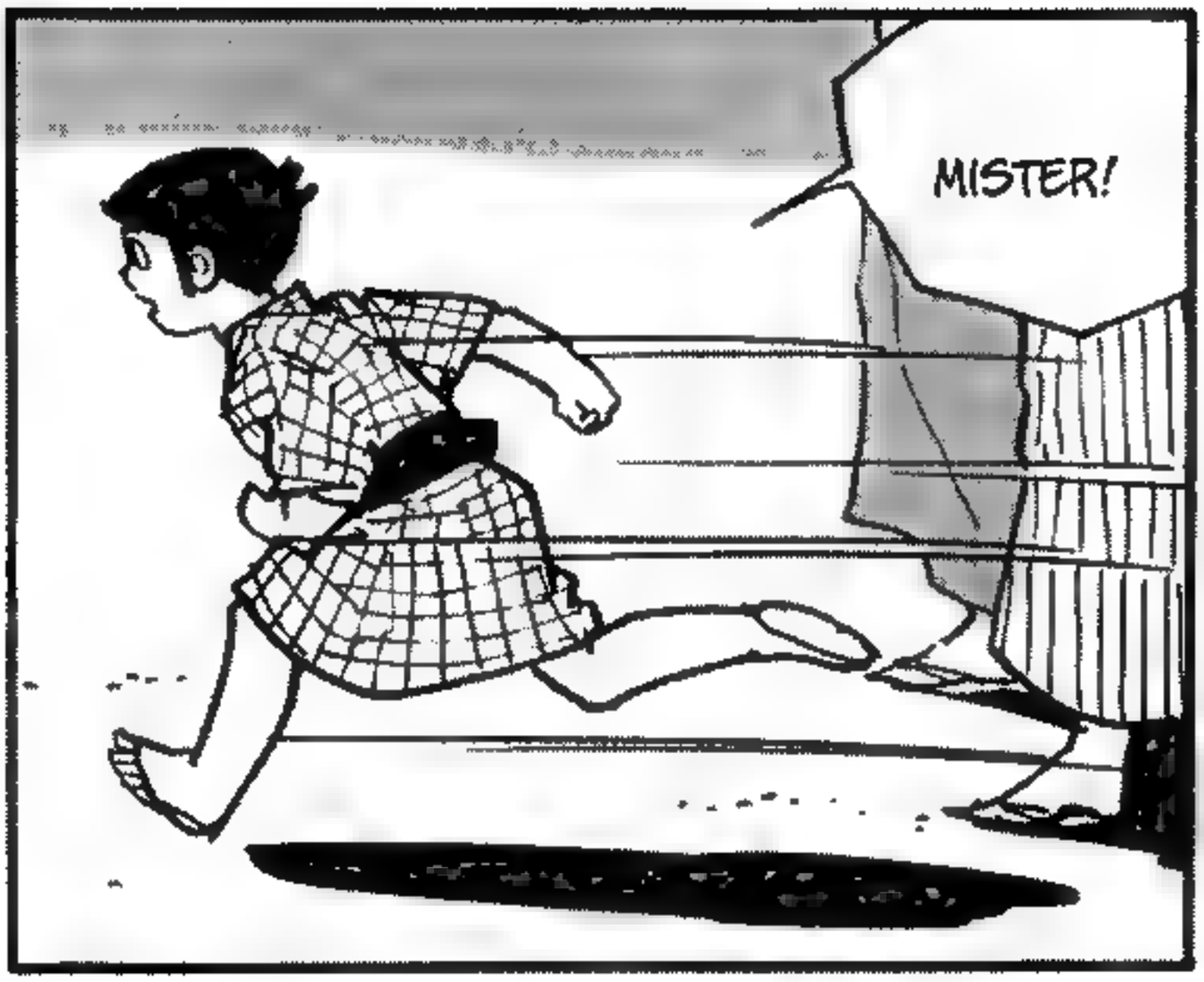
YAAHHH!!

SLASH

DAMN YOU!!

VROTCH

VENOM


MISTER!

DAMN!

MISTER...

WAIT,
MISTER!

YOU'RE LEAVING ALREADY?

AH?

THERE'S SOMETHING IMPORTANT I HAVE TO DO... I HAVE TO LEAVE THIS VILLAGE NOW.

KID...

MISTER!

LOOK AFTER YOUR GRAND-MOTHER, OKAY?

YES. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, KID.

MISTER, WAIT!

?!

IT'S JUST ME.

WH...WHO'S THERE?

...YOU'RE LEAVING ALREADY?

WHY NOT? I'M SICK OF THIS VILLAGE.

SAY... ARE YOU REALLY GONNA LEAVE THIS PLACE?

AH, IT'S YOU, THE BIWA BONZE... YOU FRIGHTENED ME.

I BELIEVE YOUR WORDS ARE THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART!

WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?

HM?

HE HE HE

ON WHETHER TO LEAVE THIS PLACE WITHOUT DOING ANY-THING...OR TO STAY AND INTERVENE!

YOU'RE HESITATING, AREN'T YOU?

*Huh?* WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

UNFORTUNATELY, THE SEEDS THAT YOU'VE ALREADY SOWN ARE ABOUT TO SPROUT AND LAY CLAIM TO YOUR PRESENCE...

*Hahaha!* YOU'RE MAKING FUN OF ME!

BUT... I HAD NO CHOICE!

FACED WITH THOSE RASCALS, YOU'VE ALREADY PROVEN TWICE YOUR GREAT ABILITY...EVERYBODY COULD SEE WHO YOU REALLY ARE.

*Hm...*

STOP SPEAKING IN RIDDLES AND SAY THINGS CLEARLY!

*Huh?* WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

NO CHOICE? *Hehe...* YOU'RE ALREADY INVOLVED IN THIS STORY. THERE ARE ONLY TWO THINGS LEFT FOR YOU TO DO, RIGHT?

WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT HIM?

...TAÏCHI!

YOU HAVE TO SETTLE THE MATTER WITH THE GONZO "FAMILY" FIRST... AND THEN, YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND THE SOLUTION TO ANOTHER PROBLEM...

DON'T YOU SEE?

CHILDREN FEEL AN INNATE ATTRACTION TO THOSE WHO'RE STRONG. AND HE WAS TWICE ABLE TO SEE HOW SKILLED YOU ARE WITH A SWORD.

TAICHI?

WAIT! DON'T MAKE ME RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND ME!

UNFORTUNATELY, IT MAY RUIN THE FUTURE OF THAT CHILD.

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO? TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE EXPECTING ME TO DO!

A CHILD'S HEART IS LIKE A BLANK PAPER. ONCE THIS PAPER IS MARKED WITH A COLOR, IT'S REALLY HARD TO CHANGE IT AND GO BACK.

...

YOU HAVE TO HARVEST WHAT YOU SOWED. UNLESS YOU ASSUME THIS RESPONSI-BILITY, I DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE ABLE TO LEAVE THIS PLACE...

I DON'T KNOW... YOU'LL HAVE TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION BY YOUR-SELF.

WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN...

I'M SORRY, MISTER. WE HAVE NO FREE ROOMS.

EXCUSE ME FOR BOTHERING YOU AT SUCH A LATE HOUR! WOULD YOU HAVE ANY ROOM LEFT?

BOM BOM BOM

WELL... I DON'T KNOW...

I UNDERSTAND... WOULD YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW WHERE I COULD FIND AN INN WITH AVAILABLE ROOMS?

HOWEVER, I'M NOT SURE THAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GET A ROOM THERE; I HEARD THAT THERE ARE YAKUZA WANDERING OVER THERE...

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE INFORMATION.

AH, YES! I DON'T THINK THE JOSHU HOUSE HAS MANY CLIENTS THESE DAYS.

AH, I'M COMING.

EXCUSE ME; I'M LOOKING FOR A ROOM TO SPEND THE NIGHT.

WHO'S THERE?

WELCOME, MISTER!

IT'S VERY KIND OF YOU.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

IT'S A CLIENT, FATHER!

WHO'S HERE?

WHAT?

WE DON'T ACCEPT YAKUZA AS CLIENTS.

EXCUSE ME, BUT... WOULD YOU MIND GOING SOMEWHERE ELSE FOR THE NIGHT?

THERE'S NO "BUT"!

BUT... FATHER!

AH! YOU CAME BACK!

AH?

GRANDPA, HE'S THE MAN WHO BROUGHT US THE MONEY! HE'S KIND!

OH... IT'S YOU, KID?!

WELL...

YOU'RE GONNA SPEND THE NIGHT HERE, AREN'T YOU?!

GRANDMA! THE BLIND MISTER FROM EARLIER IS BACK!

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN HIM! IT WAS AMAZING; HE'S UNBEATABLE WITH HIS SWORD!

AH... REALLY?

HE KILLED THEM ALL WITH ONLY TWO SWORD THRUSTS!

Zzaf! Zzaf!

TAICHI, THAT'S ENOUGH!

...

IT'S NOTHING ...

I COULD PAY BACK ALL TAMEKICHI'S DEBTS TO THIS INN'S OWNER THANKS TO THE MONEY YOU BROUGHT US BACK.

THANK YOU...

WHY?

I'D LIKE YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM TAICHI.

HOWEVER...

...

I'VE PLACED ALL MY HOPES IN TAICHI...

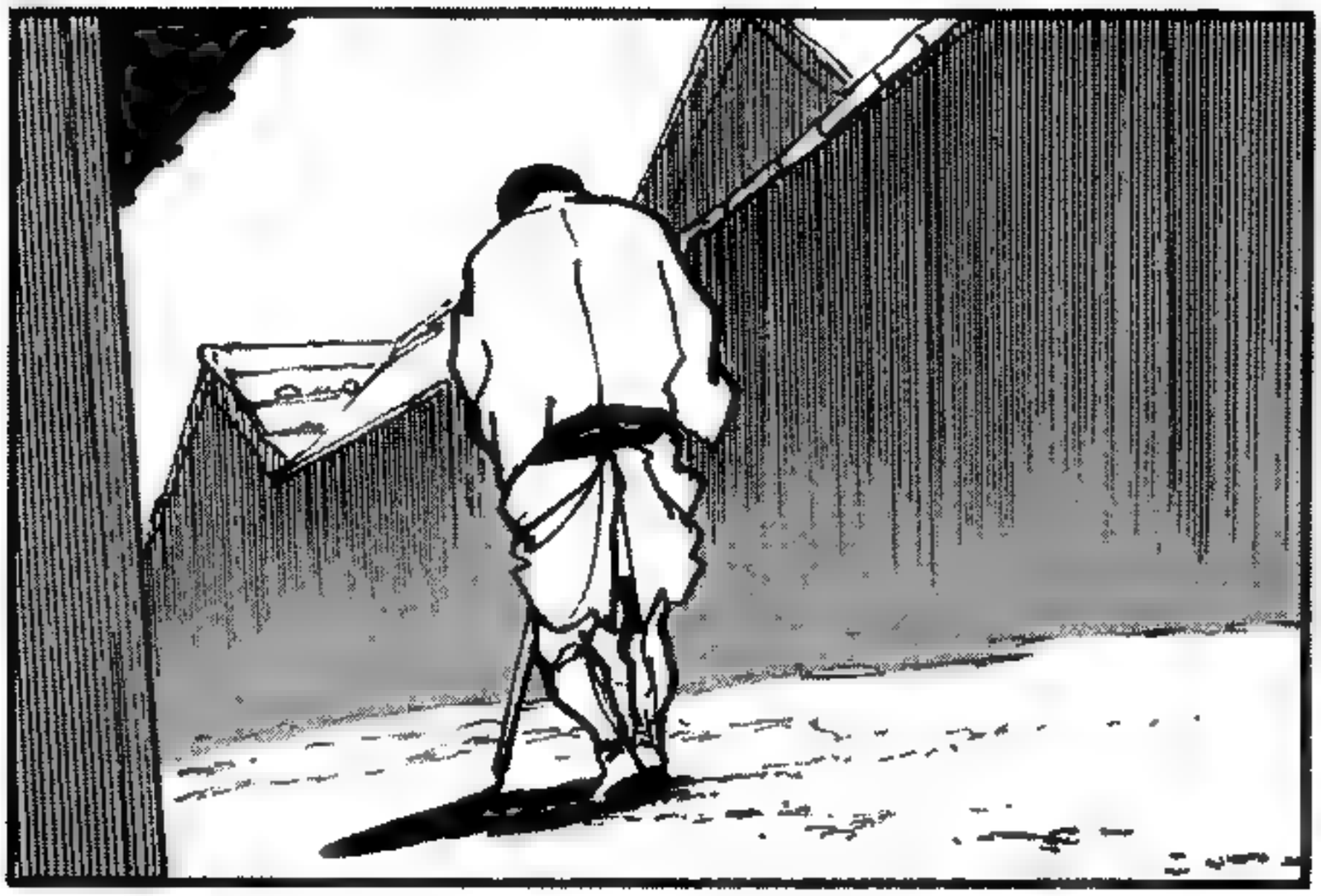
THE OWNER OF THIS INN HATES YAKUZA AND...SO DO I... BECAUSE OF WHAT TAMEKICHI HAS BEEN THROUGH.

EXCUSE ME FOR BOTHER-ING YOU!

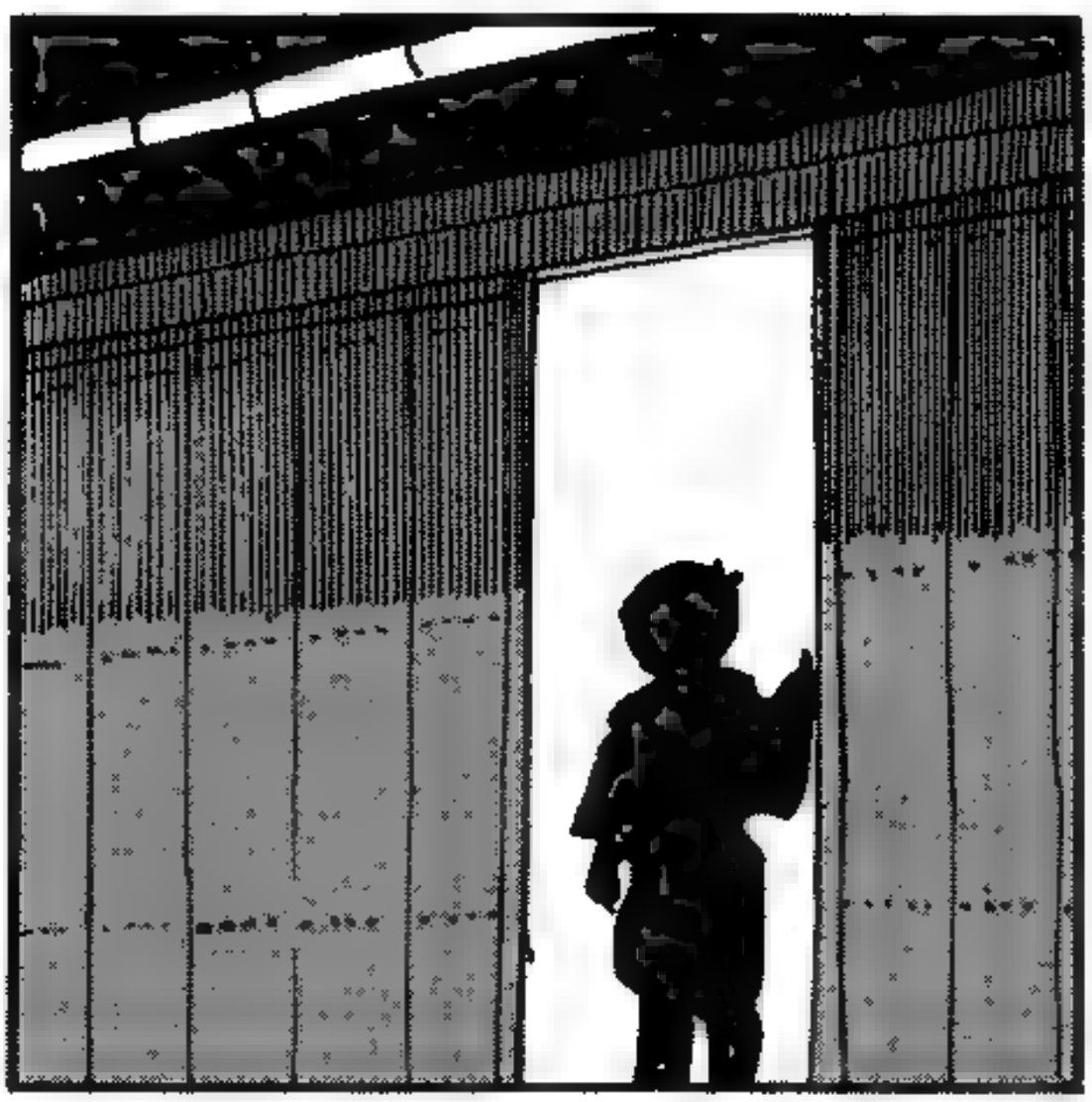
MISTER, WAIT!

AH!

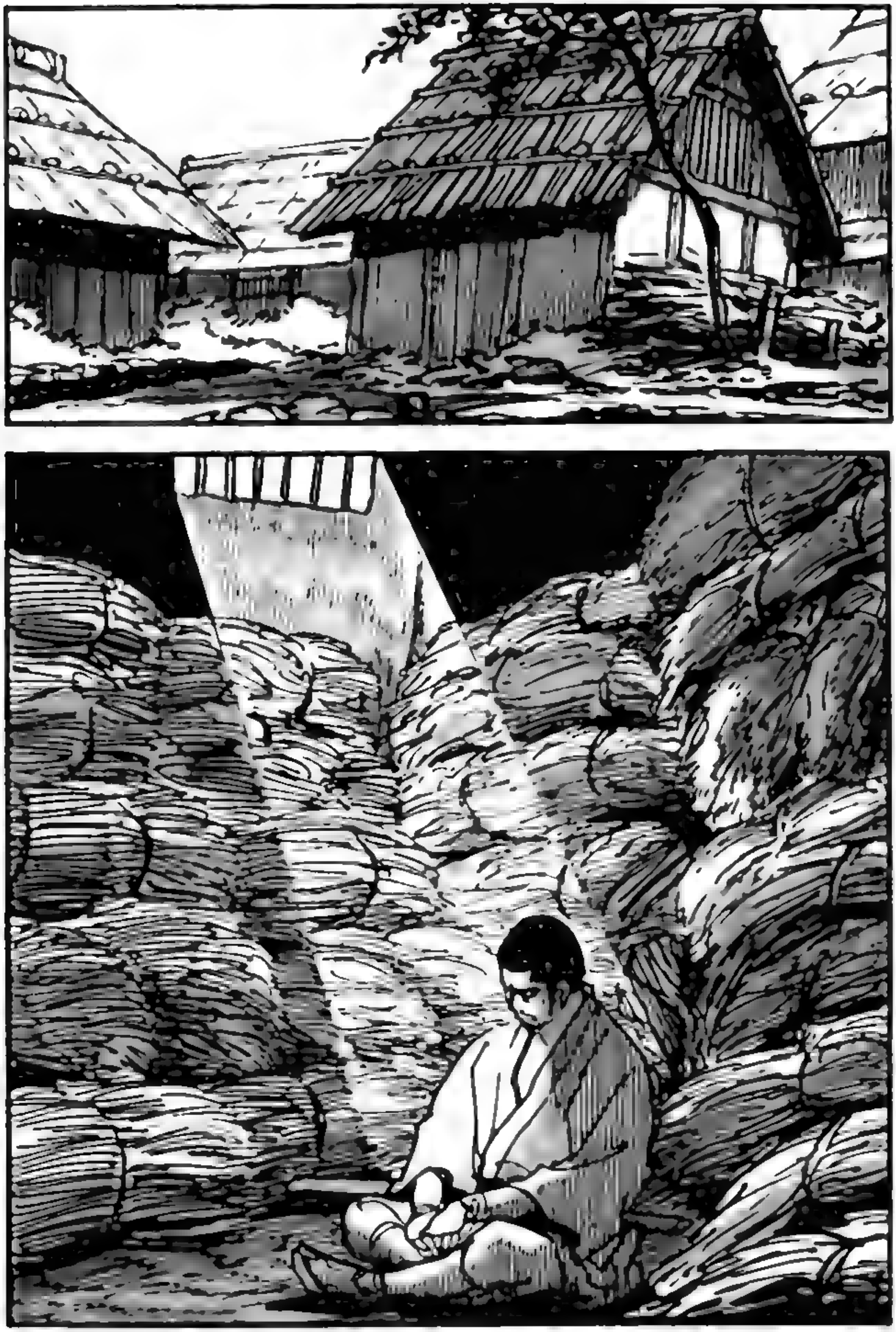
TAICHI !

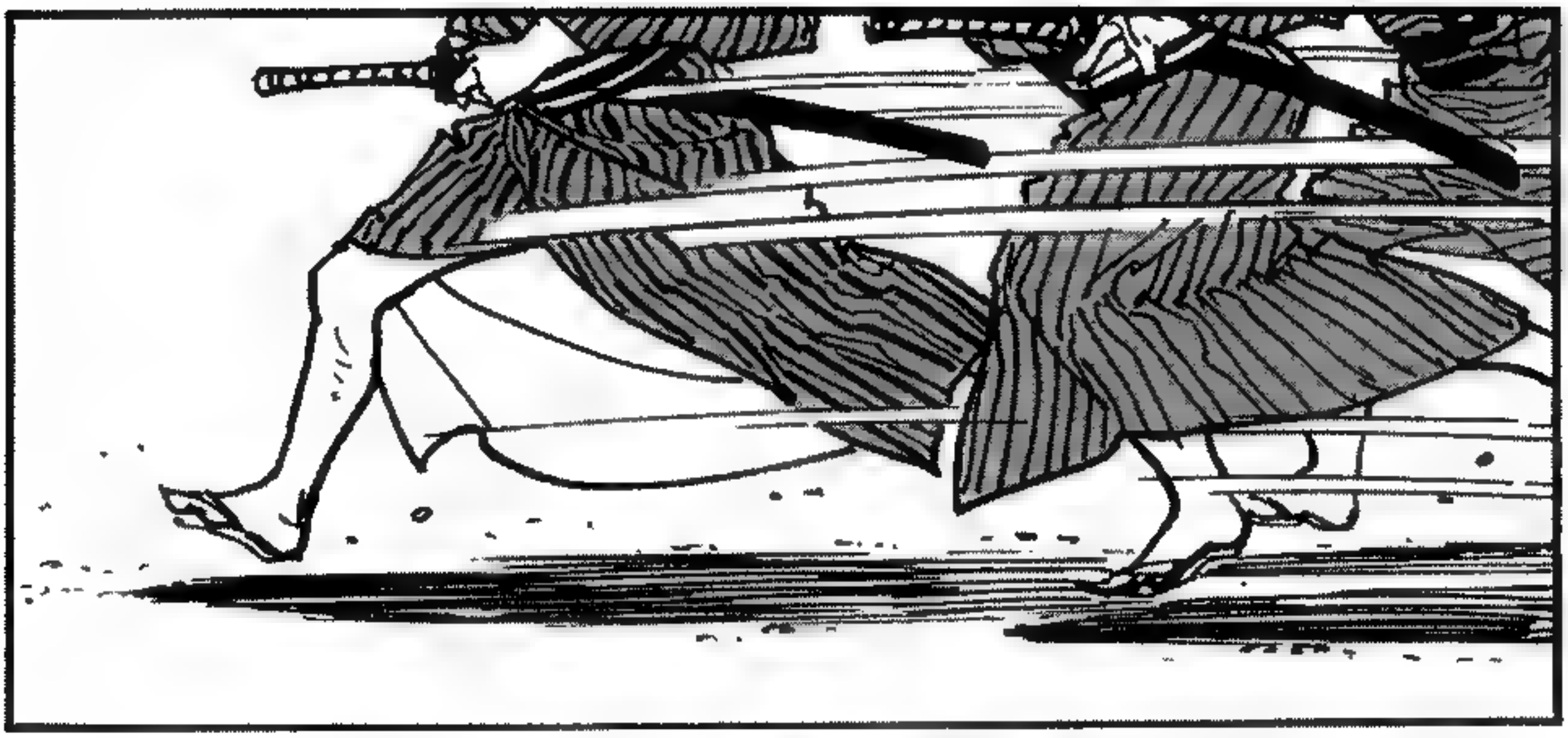


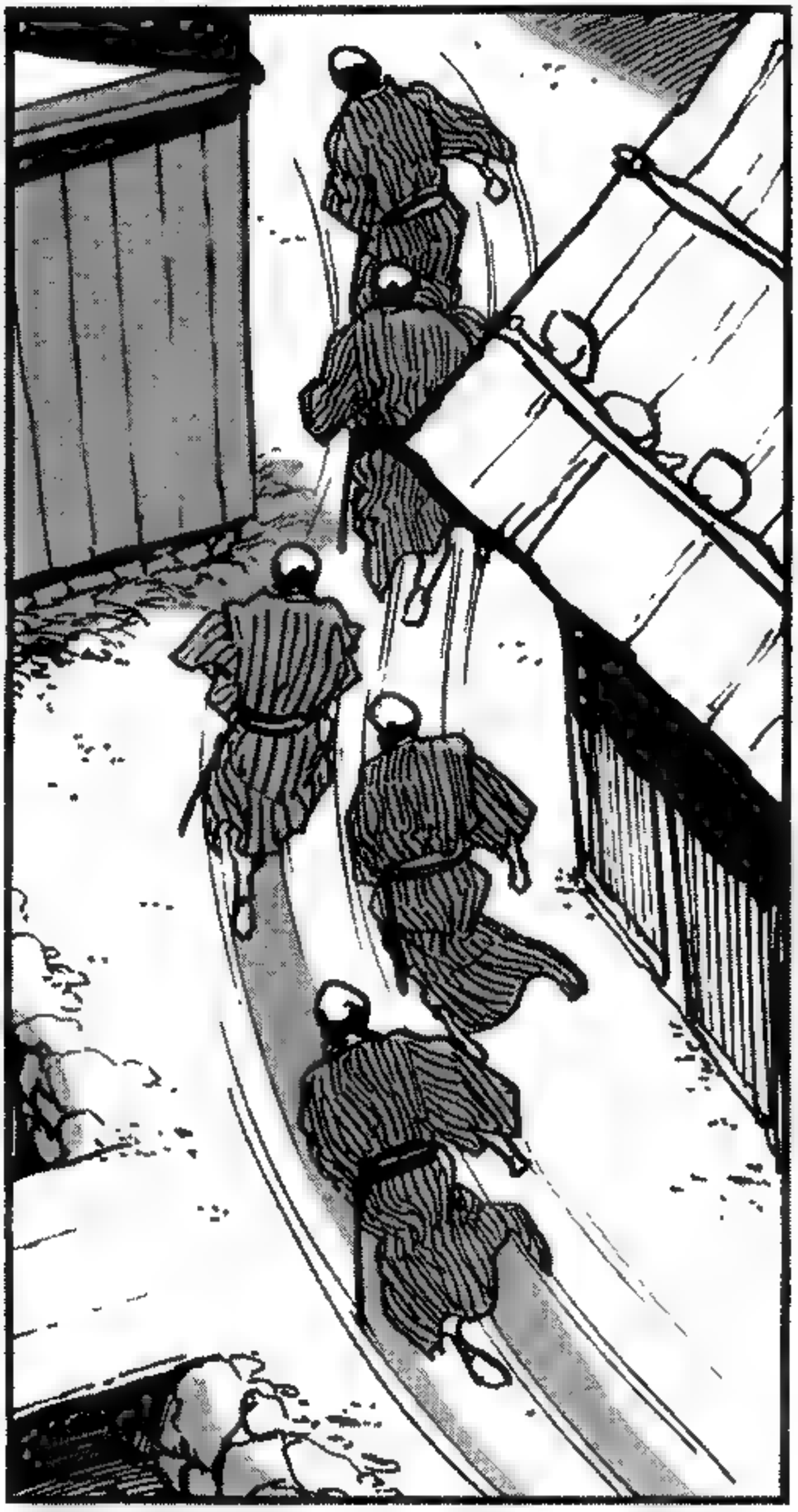
...WHY?

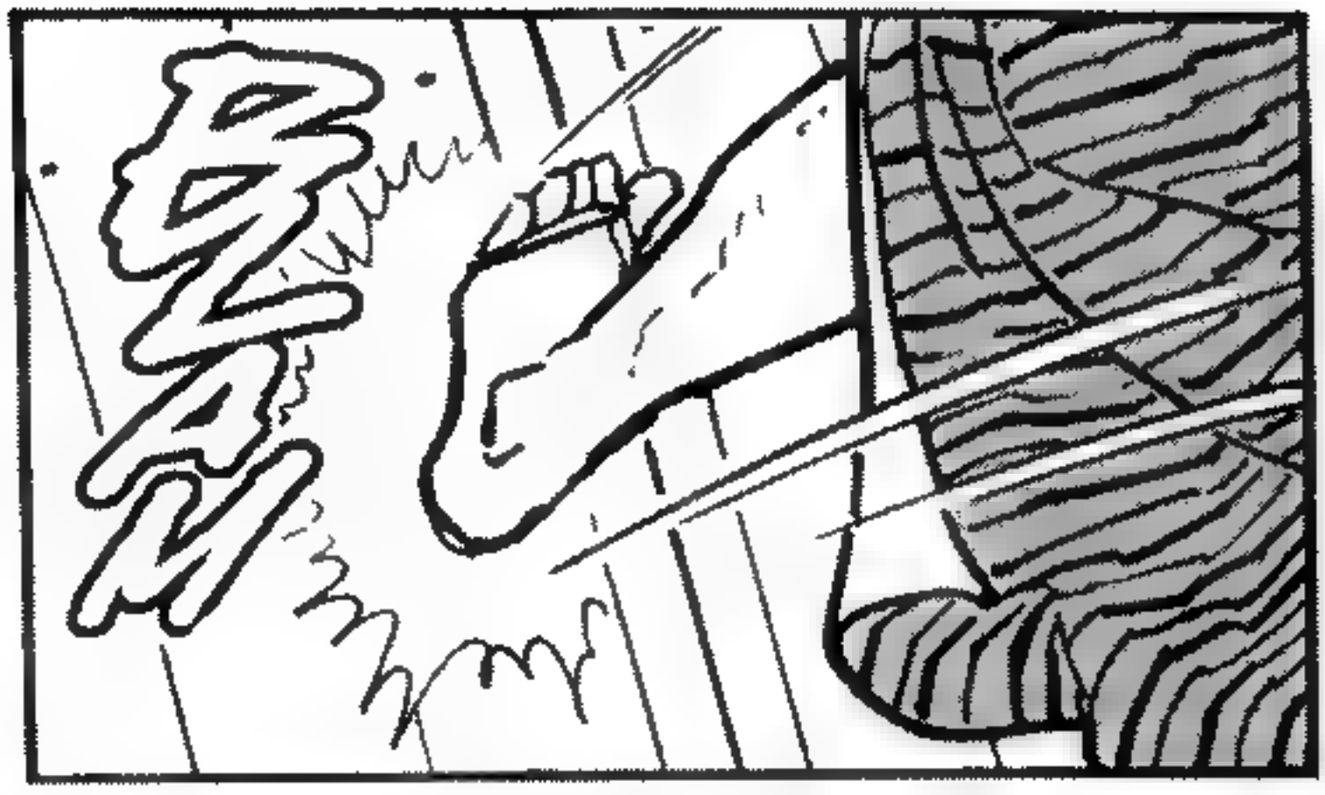


BRAVE MASSEUR... I HOPE YOU WON'T BEAR TOO DEEP A GRUDGE AGAINST ME.

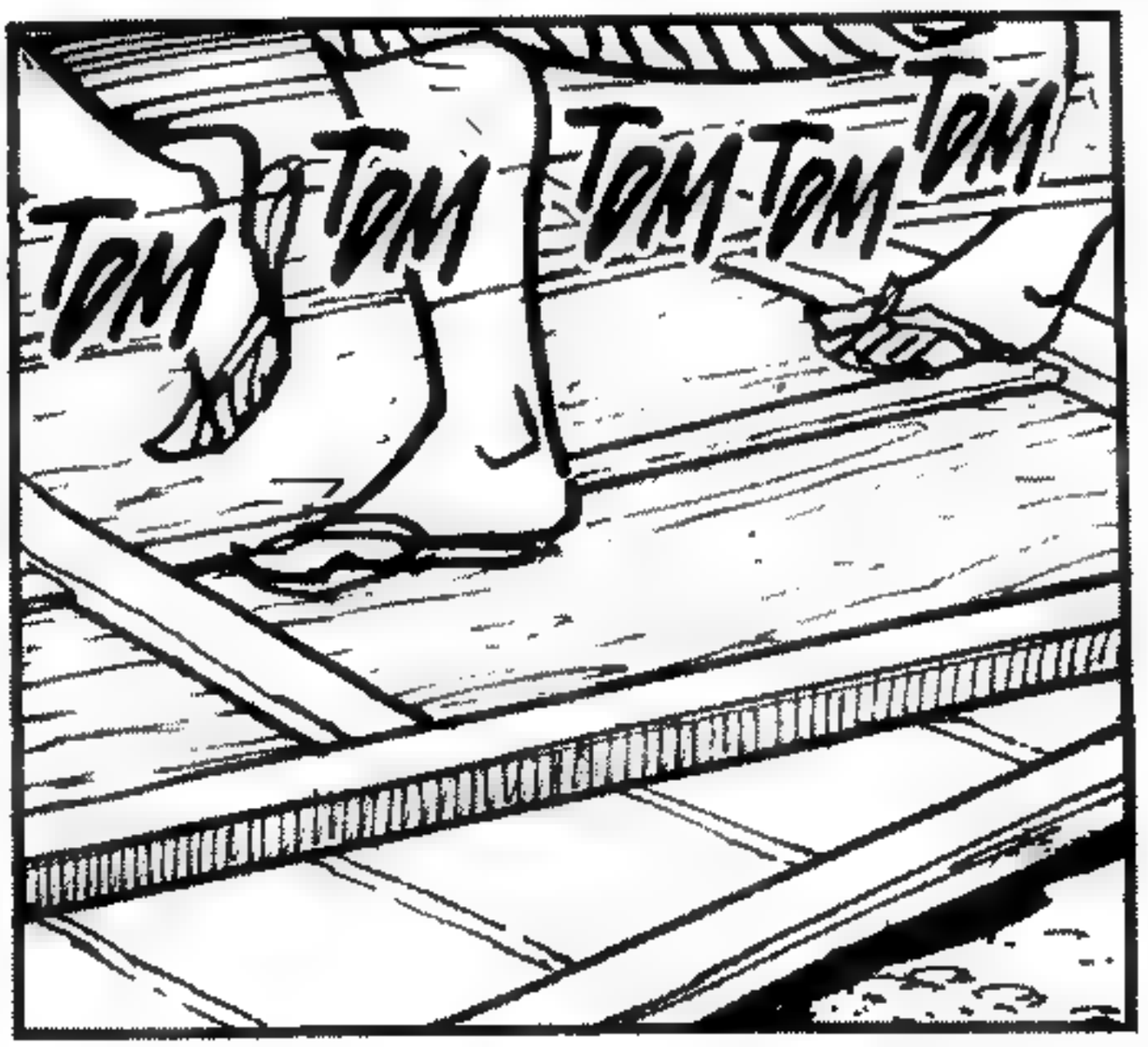








NOOOO!


TOM
TOM
TOM
TOM
TOM

WILL YOU GIVE US THE 80 RYO OR NOT?!
I TELL YOU TO LET GO OF ME !!
AAAAH!

HELP!!

DAMN YOU! WILL YOU DECIDE TO GIVE US YOUR WORK TAX?!

NOOOO! STOOOP!
LET GO OF MY WIFE! SHE'S DONE NOTHING!

I'M GONNA GIVE YOU YOUR MONEY! PLEASE, DON'T HURT HER!
LEAVE HER ALONE! I'M GONNA PAY!

GOOD!

EVEN IF I HAVE TO BORROW FROM SOMEONE...I'M GONNA PAY...

S... SAKU!

YOU HAVE THREE DAYS TO GATHER OUR MONEY! NOT ONE MORE!

WHAT?!

YOU SEE... SHE WOULD STILL BE ALIVE IF YOU HAD TAKEN LESS TIME TO DECIDE!
BASTARDS !
YOU'RE GONNA PAY! I'M GONNA AVENGE SAKU!

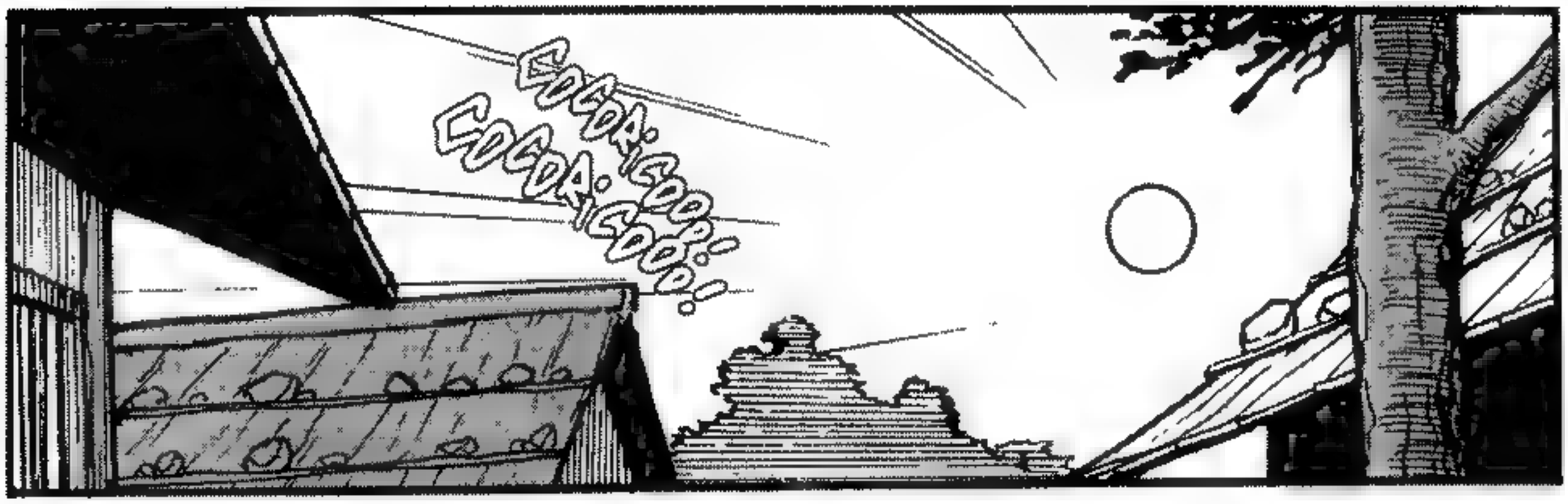
HEY!

YOU FILTHY DOG! YOU ASKED FOR IT!

AAAAARRGH!!

SSSRAQ

DIE NOW!


COCDA-COO
COCDA-COO
COCDA-COO!!

WHEN I COME TO THINK THAT THEY WERE BOTH KILLED AT THE SAME TIME!
THIS IS TERRIBLE...

THEY PROBABLY DID THAT IN RETALIATION TO WHAT THAT WEIRD MASSEUR DID TO FOUR OF THEM...

THIS VILLAGE HAS BECOME A REAL DEATH TRAP!

I ADVISE YOU NOT TO PISS OFF OUR BOSS. BRING HIM A GREAT QUANTITY OF YOUR BEST SAKE, QUICKLY!

* "FUKUBE" RESTAURANT

YES...OUR RESTAURANT HAS TURNED INTO A BANDIT'S HAUNT!

THEY REALLY BELIEVE THEY'RE AT HOME...

...FOR TOMORROW!

*Haha...* TONIGHT, WE'LL START WITH THE CAFE. I'LL LEAVE THE JOSHU-YA...

BOSS! WE STILL HAVE TWO PLACES TO SUBDUE!

WHAT? NO WITNESS ?!

THE INHABITANTS OF THE VILLAGE SAY THAT THEY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM...

BY THE WAY, HOW'S IT GOING WITH THE MAN WHO KILLED OUR MEN?

*HM...* A MASSEUR, YOU SAY?

BEFORE GETTING KILLED, DENPACHI SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A WEIRD MASSEUR WANDERING AROUND HERE. MAYBE HE'S THE ONE WE'RE LOOKING FOR...

NONE ...

YES, BOSS!

I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO BE MERCILESS TOWARDS ANYONE WHO WOULD DARE STAND IN OUR WAY, GOT IT?

MISTER!

AH!

YES!

REGARDLESS, YOU HAVE TO MAKE AN INCURSION AT THE CAFE BEFORE THE SUNSET.

WHERE DID YOU SLEEP LAST NIGHT?

IT'S YOU, KID?!

IT'S TRUE! A THOUSAND NEEDLES SUDDENLY POPPED OUT FROM THE FLOOR!

WHAT?!

...IN HELL!

LAST NIGHT?

He he ...

Hahaha! YOU'RE A GODDAMN LIAR!

HELL YES! MY ASS HAS BEEN PIERCED LIKE A STRAINER...

DID YOU GET HURT?

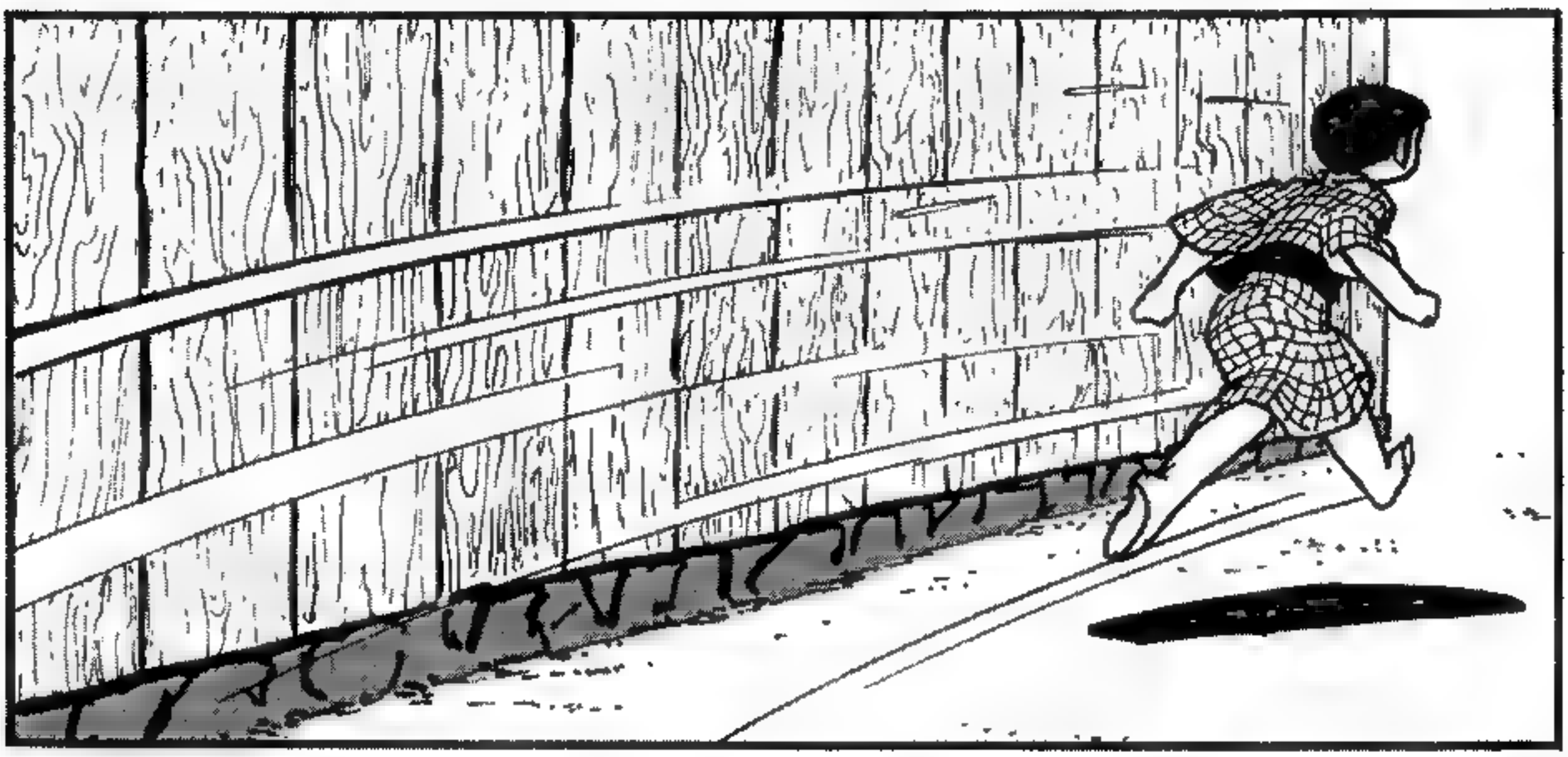
I THINK THEY'RE GOING TO MY HOME!

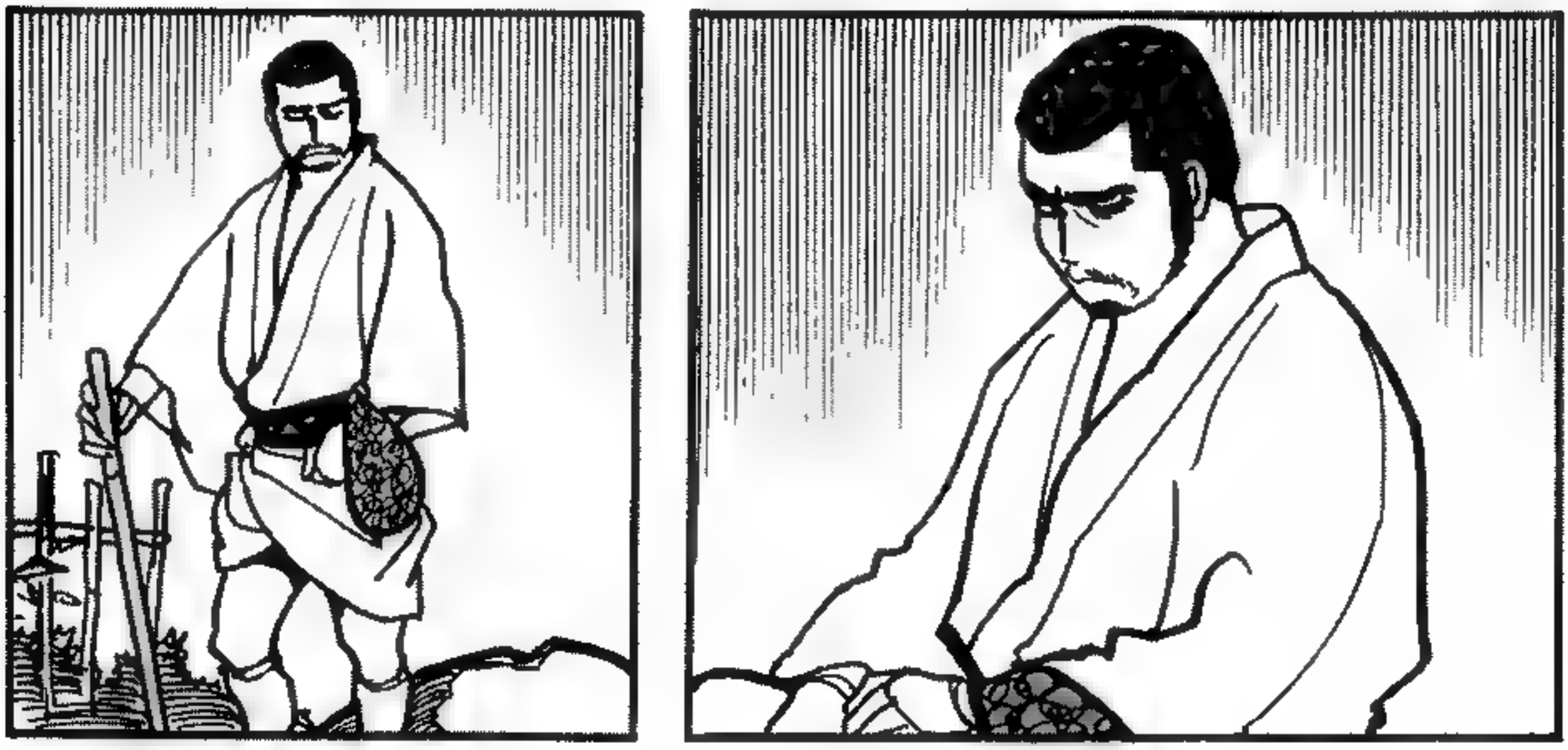
HEY, LOOK! THOSE ARE THE BANDITS FROM THE GONZO FAMILY!

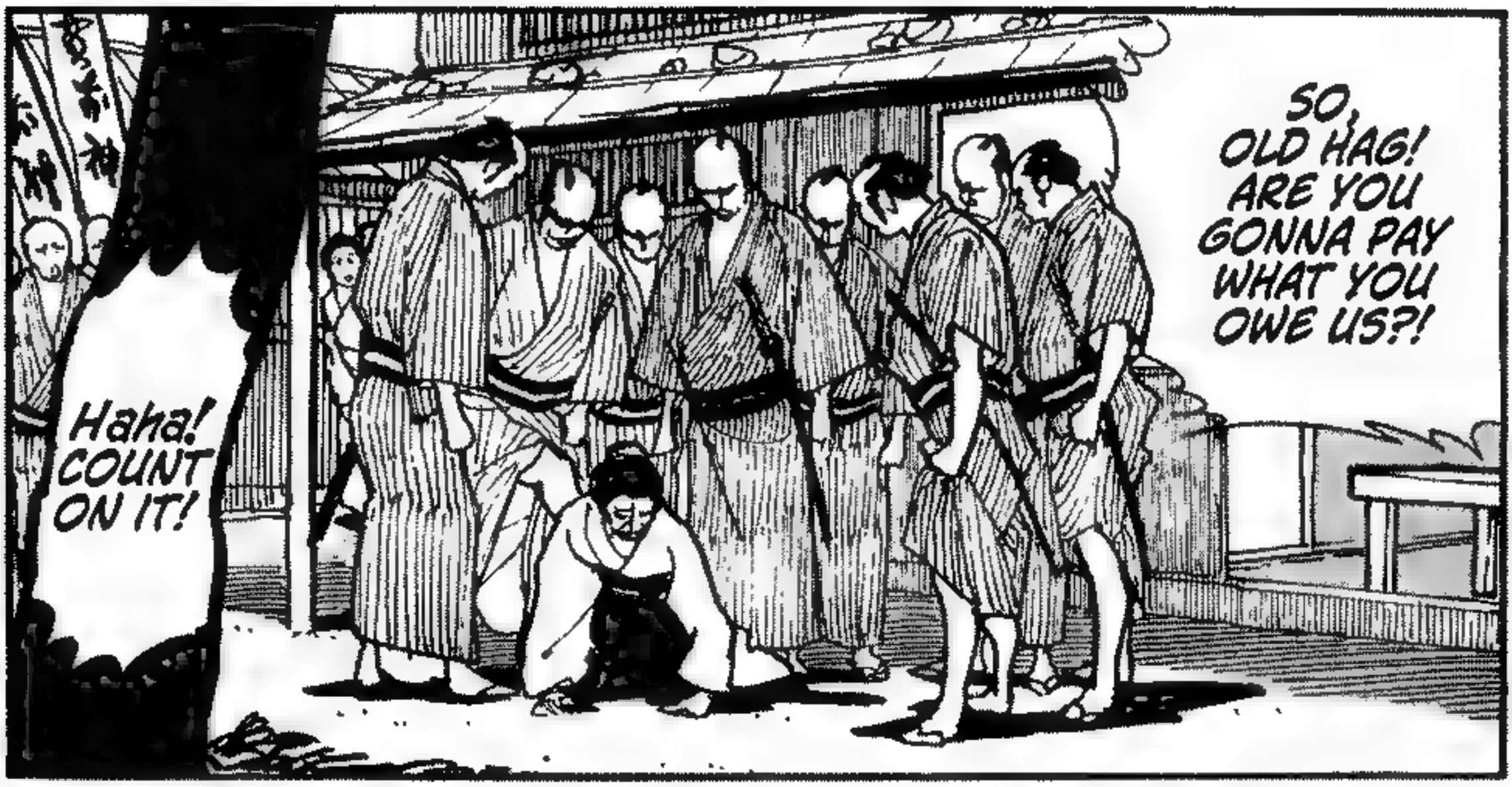
MISTER ...

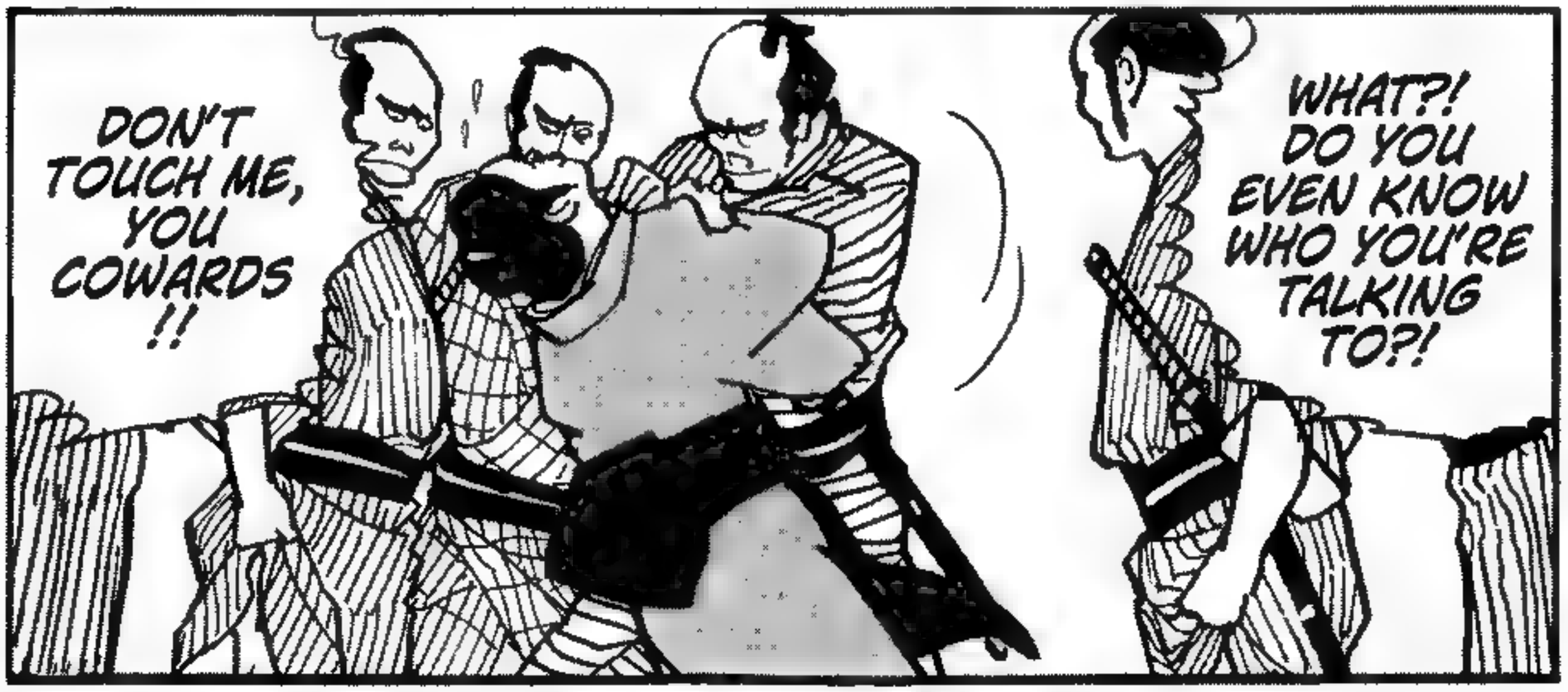
PLEASE! GET RID OF THOSE MEAN MEN FOR US!

MISTER!

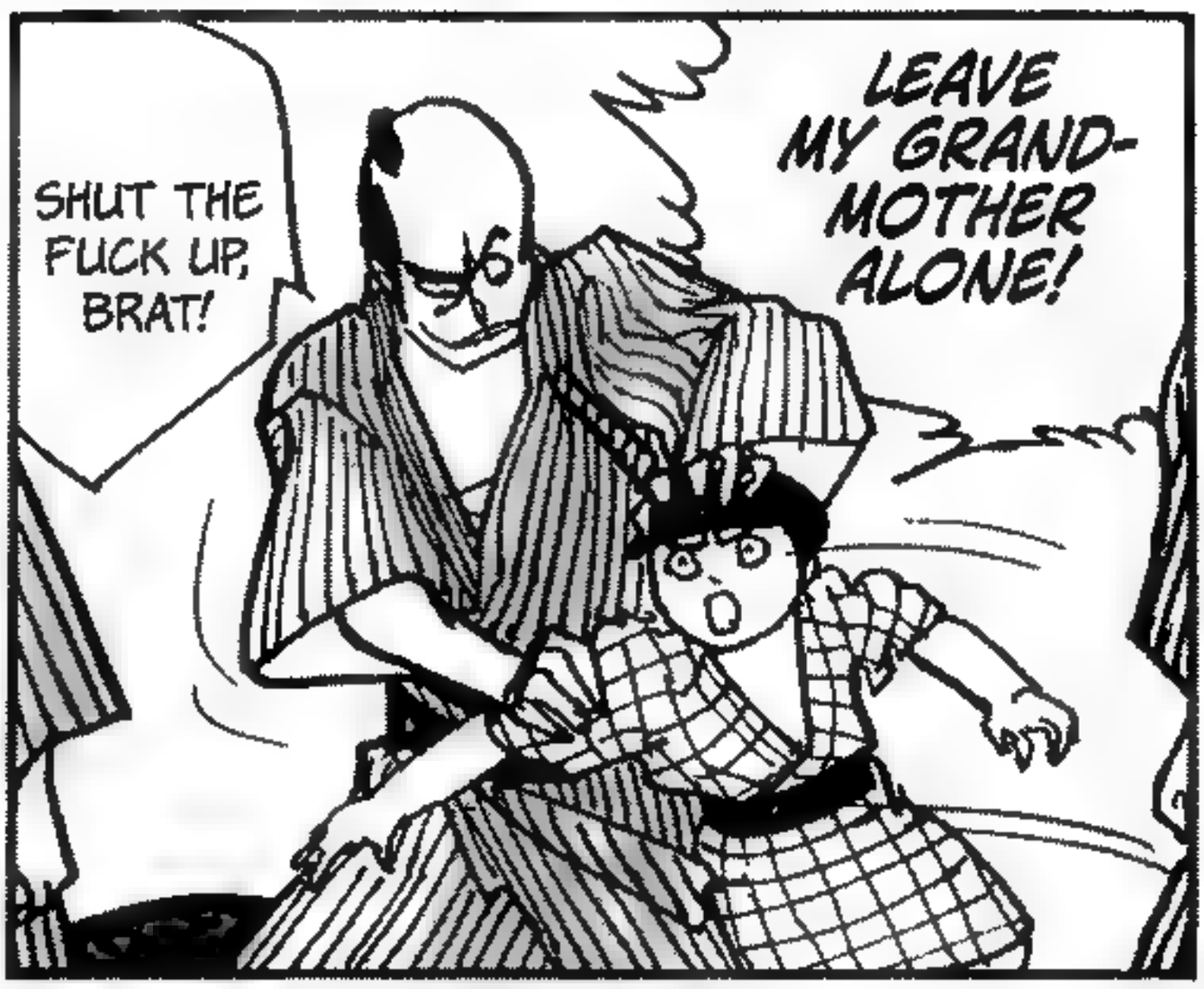





Haha! COUNT ON IT!
SO, OLD HAG! ARE YOU GONNA PAY WHAT YOU OWE US?!


DON'T TOUCH ME, YOU COWARDS !!
WHAT?! DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO?!

GET LOST!


SHUT THE FUCK UP, BRAT!
LEAVE MY GRAND-MOTHER ALONE!

DID WE ASK YOU ANYTHING, OLD MAN?!

HOW DARE YOU TREAT AN OLD WOMAN AND A KID LIKE THIS?!

GRANDPA!

...Nn...

VLOM

COME ON, DON'T WORRY. EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE FINE.

PLEASE, KILL ALL THOSE MEAN MEN!

Ah, MISTER, YOU'RE HERE!

THIS IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!

GENTLEMEN, DON'T YOU SEE THAT THIS OLD WOMAN AND THIS KID ARE TOTALLY HARMLESS?! THERE'S NO NEED TO HURT THEM.

IN THIS CASE, WHY DON'T THEY PAY WHAT'S OURS?

IF THEY LOSE THEIR CAFE, THEY'LL HAVE NO WAY TO LIVE ANYMORE!

I BEG YOU...

COME ON, GENTLEMEN, BE REASONABLE...

SHUT UP, KID!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BEG THEM! JUST KILL THEM WITH YOUR SWORDSTICK!

MISTER!!

COME ON. I BESEECH YOU.

ALL THIS IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, DAMN BLIND MAN!

...WHAT?

SAY!

AH!

WOULDN'T YOU BE THE ONE WHO ATTACKED AND KILLED FOUR OF OUR MEN LAST NIGHT?!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?! HOW COULD AN OLD BLIND MAN DO SUCH A THING?!

YEAH! WITH ONE SWORD THRUST!

WHAT?! FOUR...

DON'T MOCK US, OLD HAG!

BUT... I DON'T KNOW!

Hah! SINCE YOU'RE SO SMART, WHY DON'T YOU TELL US WHO DID THE DEED?!

ARE YOU REALLY TRYING TO PISS ME OFF?!

WHAT?!

PLEASE... YOU CAN'T ATTACK OLD PEOPLE LIKE THIS.

IF YOU LIKE BEING BEATEN UP, YOU'LL BE SERVED!

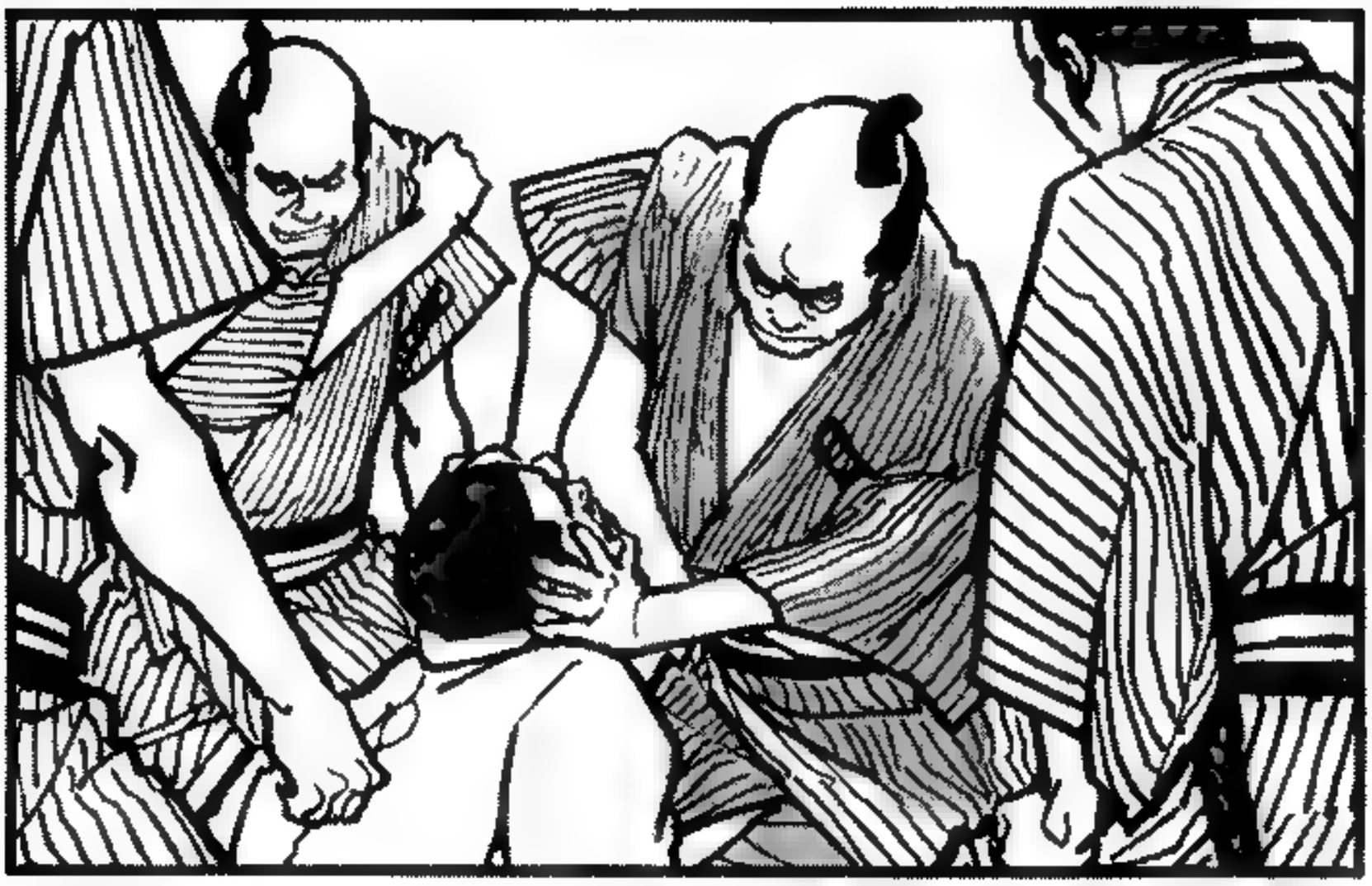
TAKE THAT!!

DOM BAM

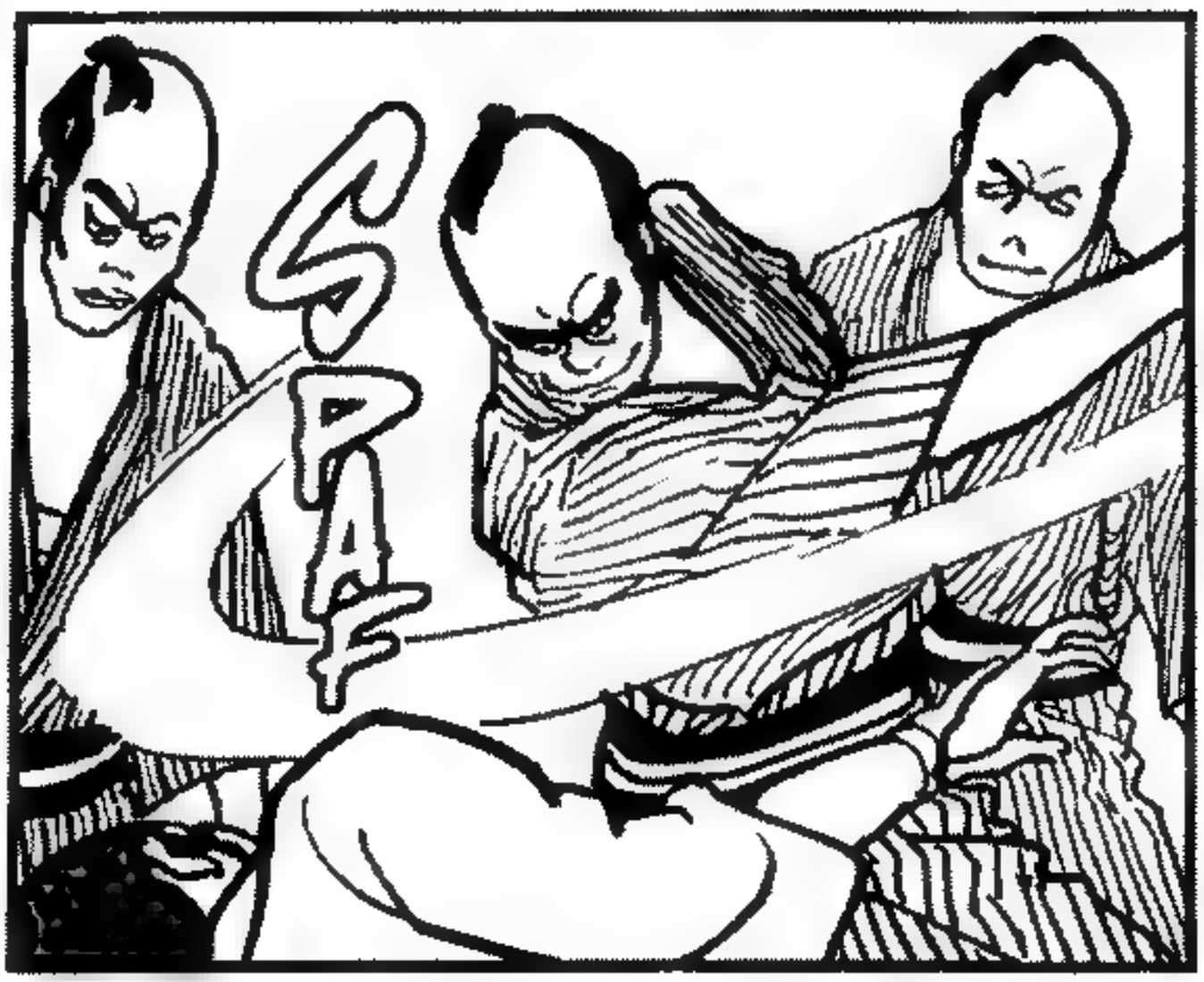
SPAF

PAF

BAF



BOM


SPAF

PAF
BOOM

Haha! DON'T BE SUCH A BAD LOSER!

HERE'S FIFTY RYO*! NOW, GET OUTTA HERE!

I'M GONNA PAY YOU!

ENOUGH!

* AROUND 25000 EURO

HEY, MASSEUR! I'M NOT DONE WITH YOU YET! I'LL COME TO SEE YOU SOON!

DON'T YOU THINK YOU SHOULD'VE DONE THIS FROM THE BEGINNING?

WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT?

IT'S NOT... THAT BAD...
POOR MAN! THEY'VE REALLY BEATEN YOU UP!
YOU'RE JUST A COWARD!
YES... IT'S BETTER LIKE THIS...

I'M SORRY I TREATED YOU LIKE A YAKUZA.

I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY.

*MM.* I UNDER-STAND..

I DON'T KNOW HOW ALL THIS HAPPENED... BUT I NEVER INTENDED TO BECOME A YAKUZA.

COME ON, IT'S NO BIG DEAL.

YOU KNOW... I'D LIKE SO MUCH THAT TAICHI BECOME A SERIOUS AND HARD-WORKING MAN.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING CARE OF ME...

I HAVE A VERY EFFICA-CIOUS ONE.

I'M GONNA PUT SOME OINTMENT ON IT.

YES, OF COURSE... IT'S NORMAL... OW!

I WOULD'VE BLAMED MYSELF FOR MY ENTIRE LIFE IF YOU HAD BEEN KILLED!

YOU BROUGHT ME THE MONEY FROM MY SON.

SAY...WHY DID YOU TRY TO PROTECT ME FROM THOSE BANDITS?

...

I DON'T WANT TO BE INDISCREET, BUT...WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO NOW?

YES, THANK YOU..

ARE YOU FEELING BETTER?

ISN'T IT A LITTLE BIT... ABRUPT?

YOU'RE GONNA LEAVE?

I HAVE NO REASON TO STAY HERE NOW THAT THE DRUMS FEAST IS OVER...

NO.

WELL... NO.

I'M THE ONE WHO BOTHERED YOU AFTER ALL...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

I'M SORRY I DIDN'T WELCOME YOU LIKE I SHOULD'VE...

...

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR EVERYTHING!

...

EXCUSE ME... I'VE HEARD THAT THE BOSS OF THE GONZO FAMILY IS HERE...

* "FUKUBE" RESTAURANT

YES! WE HAVE A NEW TERRITORY, ALONG WITH 400 RYO* THAT WE'VE EARNED AS "KEY MONEY"...THE BUSINESS LOOKS BRIGHT, BOSS!

*Hohoho*...THE CARD PLAY THAT'S SCHEDULED FOR TOMORROW IN THE JOSHU-YA ROOM IS CONFIRMED! WE'LL OFFICIALLY INTRODUCE OUR NEW TERRITORY.

* AROUND ZOOOOO EURO

WHO'RE YOU?

IS THE BOSS OF THE GONZO FAMILY WITH YOU?

EXCUSE ME...

WHAT?

I'M A MASSEUR, AT YOUR SERVICE.

*Ah!*

HEY, BOSS! THAT FOOL DIDN'T EVEN TAKE HIS SHOES OFF!

WAIT A SEC! I DON'T REMEMBER ASKING FOR A MASSEUR!

WHAT?

BOSS! THAT'S HIM!

YOU MAY NOT HAVE ASKED ME TO COME BUT I HAVE SOME MATTERS TO SETTLE WITH YOU...

WHAT?!

YOU BASTARD!

BUT...

ZZAF

AH!

DARVON

DAMN MASSEUR! ON GUARD!
WHAT!
WATCH
!

BARLOM

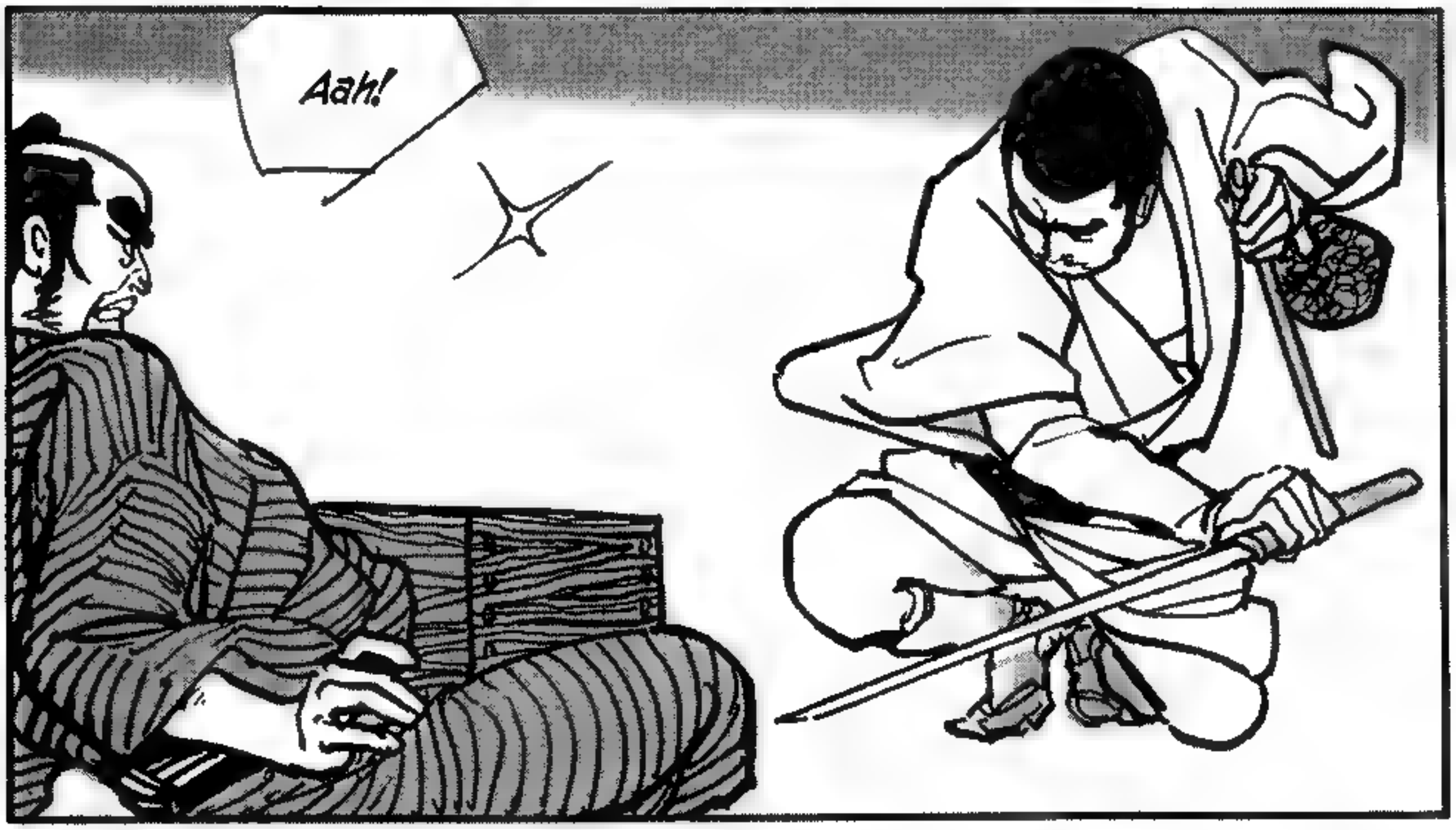
Ah!

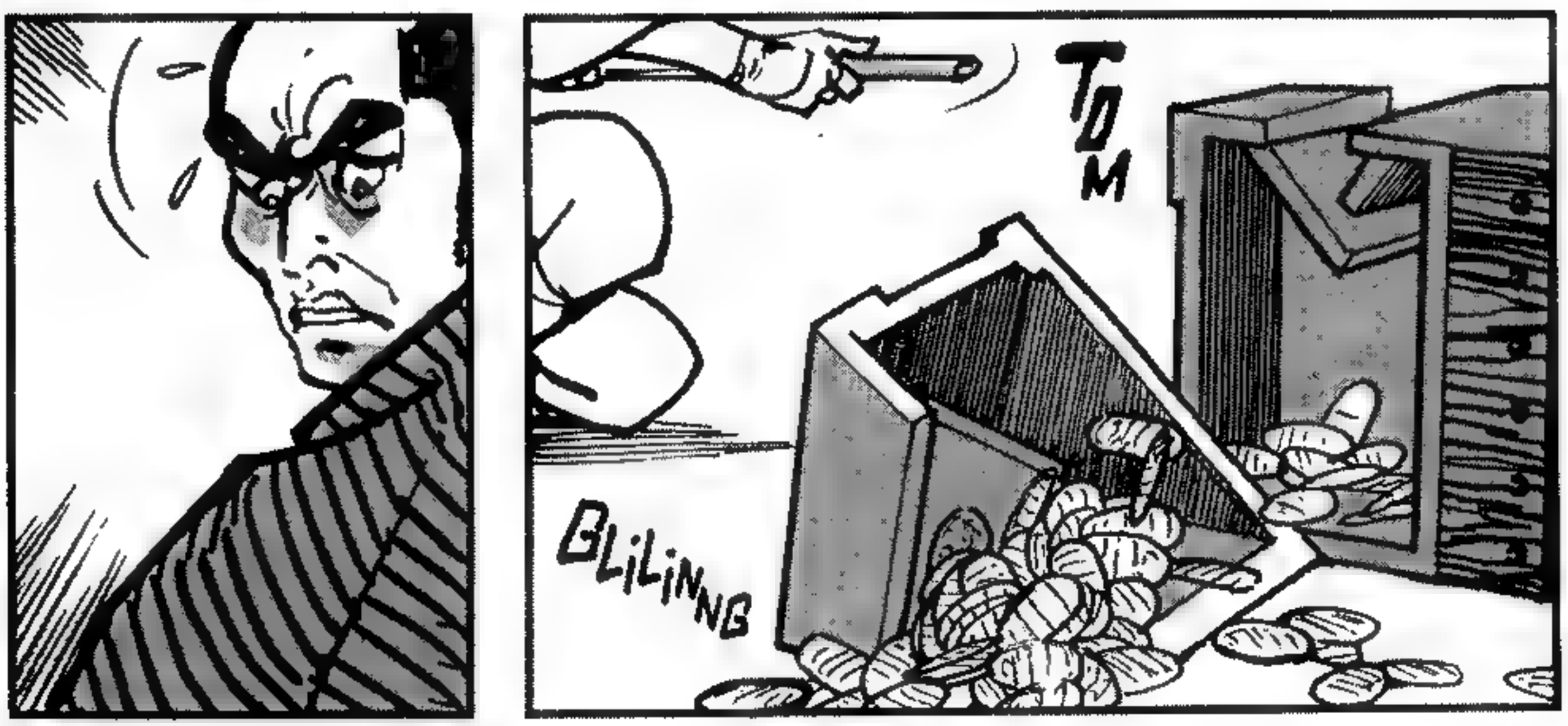
I DIDN'T COME HERE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE.

COME ON...

BUT...

REALLY? AND... WHAT IS IT?!
I'M JUST HERE TO GET SOMETHING BACK...


Aah!


TDM
BLiLiNNG

I WANT TO GET BACK THE 400 RYO THAT YOU UNJUSTLY EXTORTED FROM SEVEN SHOPKEEPERS OF THIS VILLAGE.

THIS GOLD, MISTER...JUST THIS GOLD.

*HM*...IS THIS UPSETTING YOU? YOU CAN TELL ME...

ARE YOU SERIOUS?!

STRANGE... THAT SILENCE WHICH IS HANGING OVER IN THE ROOM...

I DON'T WANT TO RUSH YOU, BUT... MAY I HAVE YOUR ANSWER?

BOSS...

IT'S BETTER LIKE THIS.

AH! THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

DO AS YOU WISH.

I BELIEVE IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY, ISN'T IT?

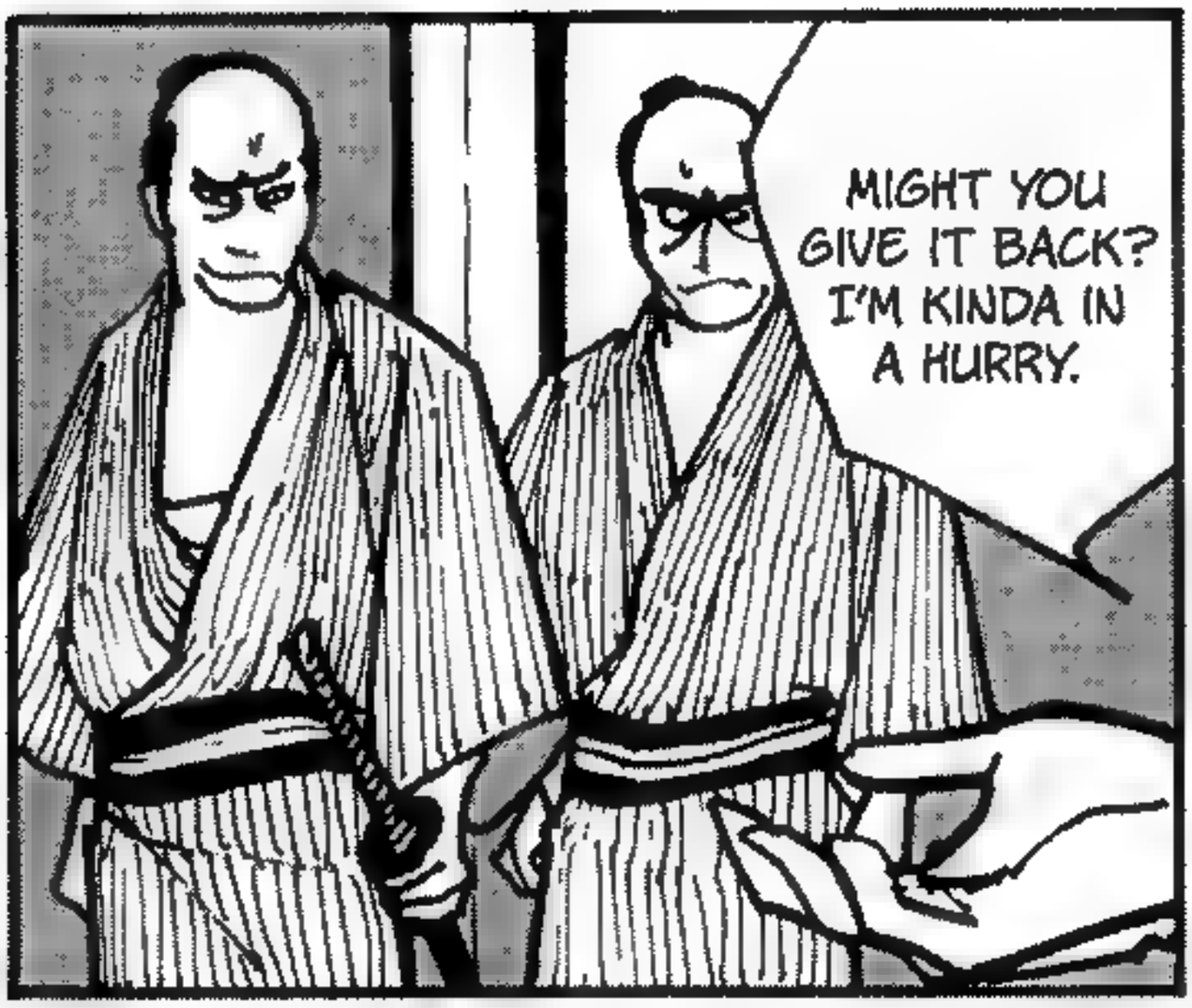
VVOM

DAMN YOU!

I'M SORRY FOR YOU WHO WERE SO CLOSE ...

*Dang!* IT SLIPPED OUT OF MY HAND.

OOOW !!


MIGHT YOU GIVE IT BACK? I'M KINDA IN A HURRY.

I HAVE TO LEAVE YOU NOW.

THANK YOU.

TELL ME, BOSS!

IT WOULD BE VERY KIND OF YOU IF YOU GAVE ME A LITTLE CUP!

DO YOU SMELL THE GOOD AROMA OF ALCOHOL?

...YOU'RE VERY KIND!

*Hahaha!* MY NOSE IS TICKLING ME! IT'S ALWAYS LIKE THIS WHEN I SMELL THE GOOD PERFUME OF SAKE!

BOSS GONZO, TO CELEBRATE OUR MEETING...

MY NOSE IS ALWAYS RIGHT!

HE'S PUTTING A BOOGER IN THE CUP

*Mm!*

HE'S DRINKING THE SAKE WITH THE BOOGER

ALLOW ME TO SERVE YOU!

WELL... I'M LEAVING YOU NOW.

*Hahaha!* I LIKE SAKE WHEN IT'S A LITTLE FULL-BODIED!!

...

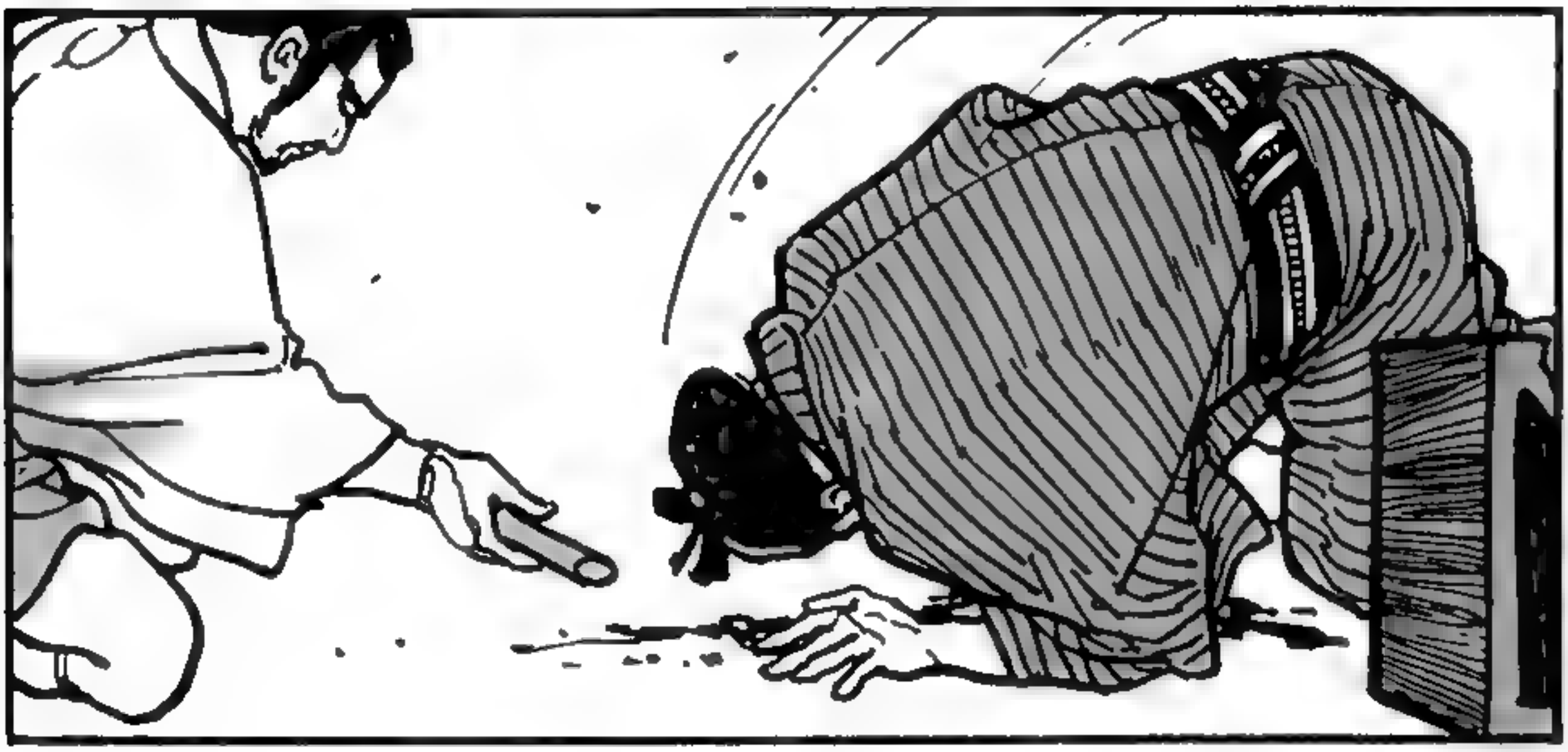
CHIEF GONZO, WOULD YOU MIND LENDING ME THREE RYO AND ONE BU? I'M A LITTLE BROKE THESE DAYS...

AH, YES! I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN... I HAVE ANOTHER FAVOR TO ASK YOU.

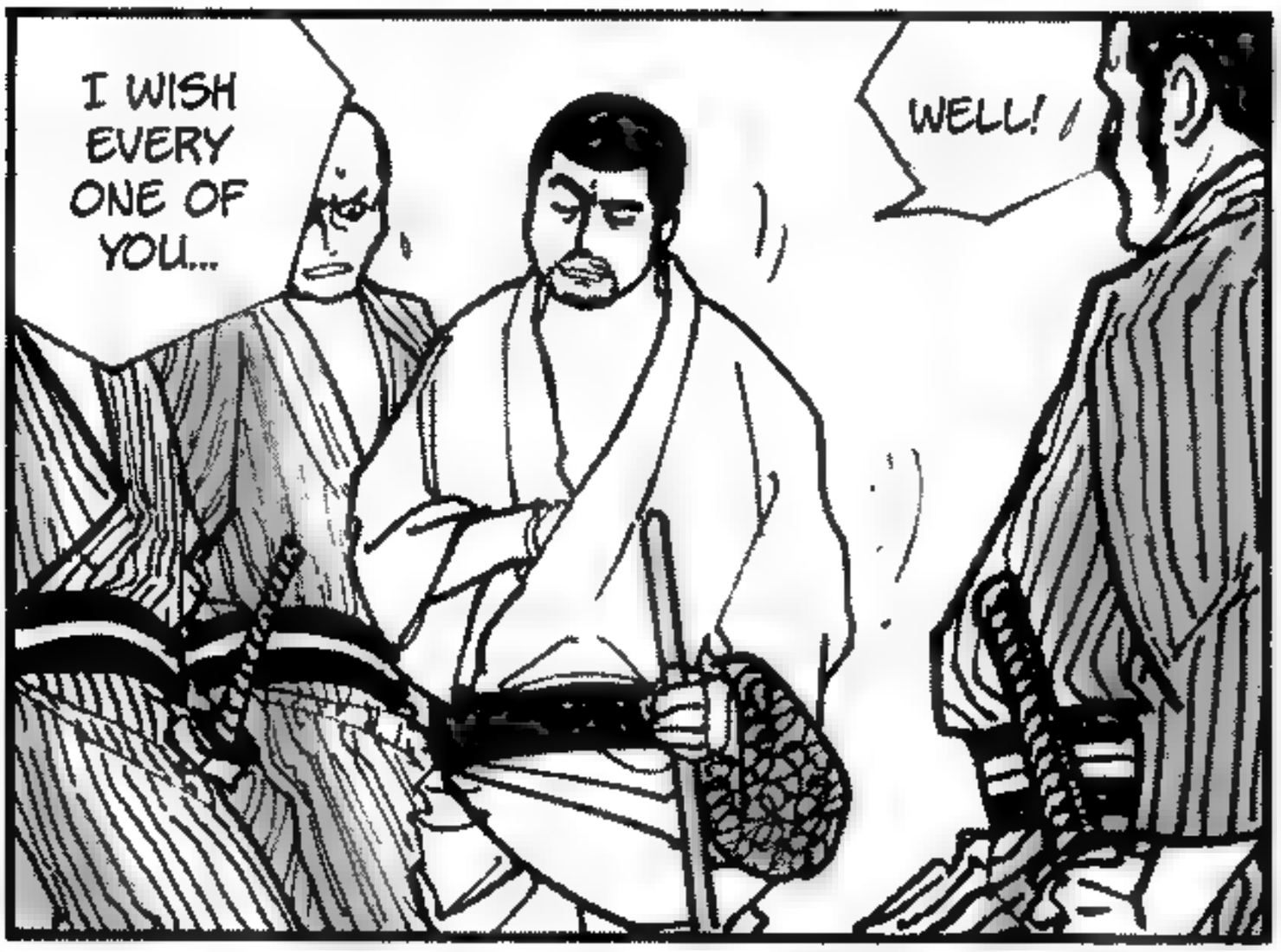
THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING.

IT'LL BE A GREAT HELP!

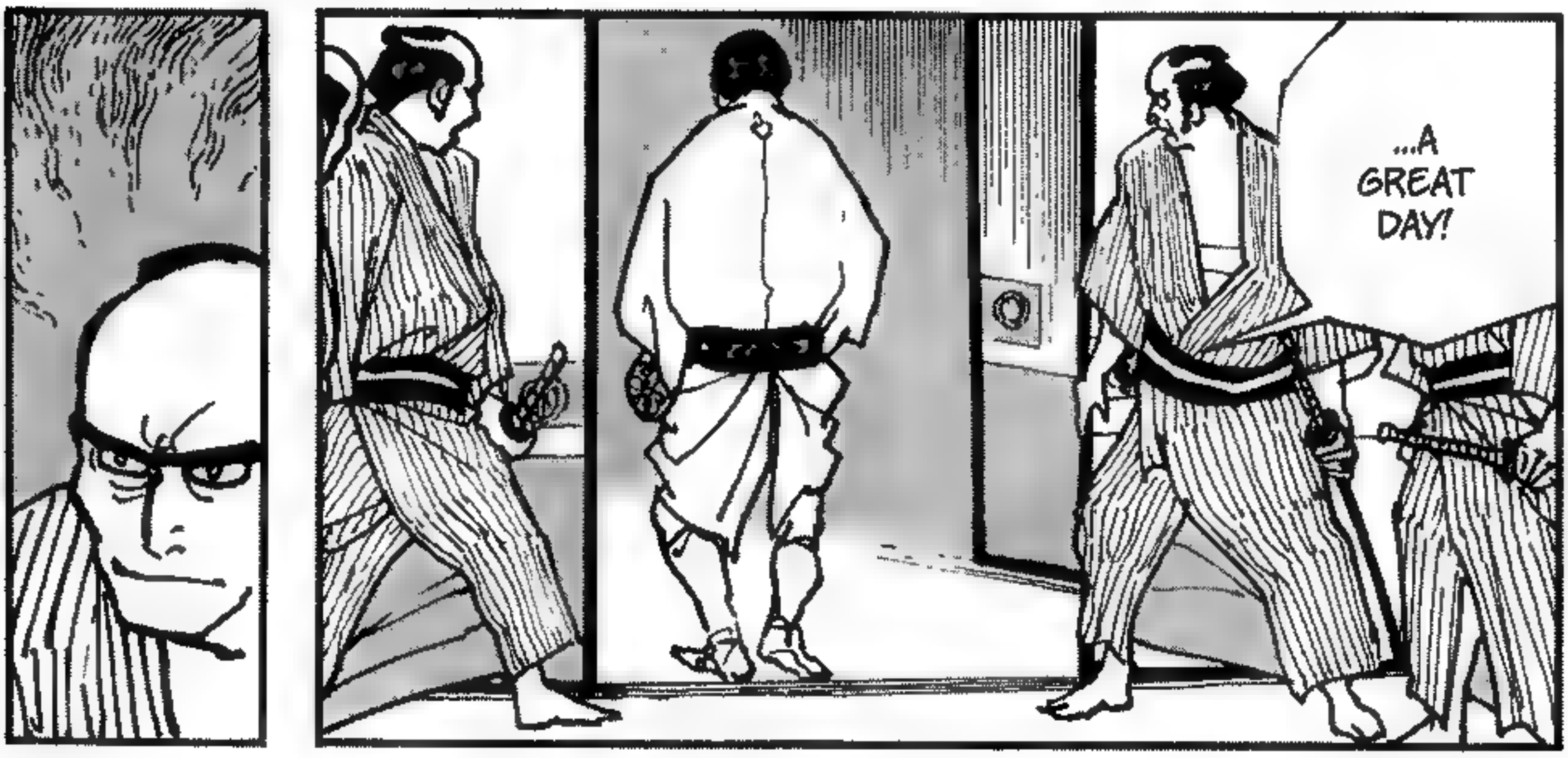
WHACK-

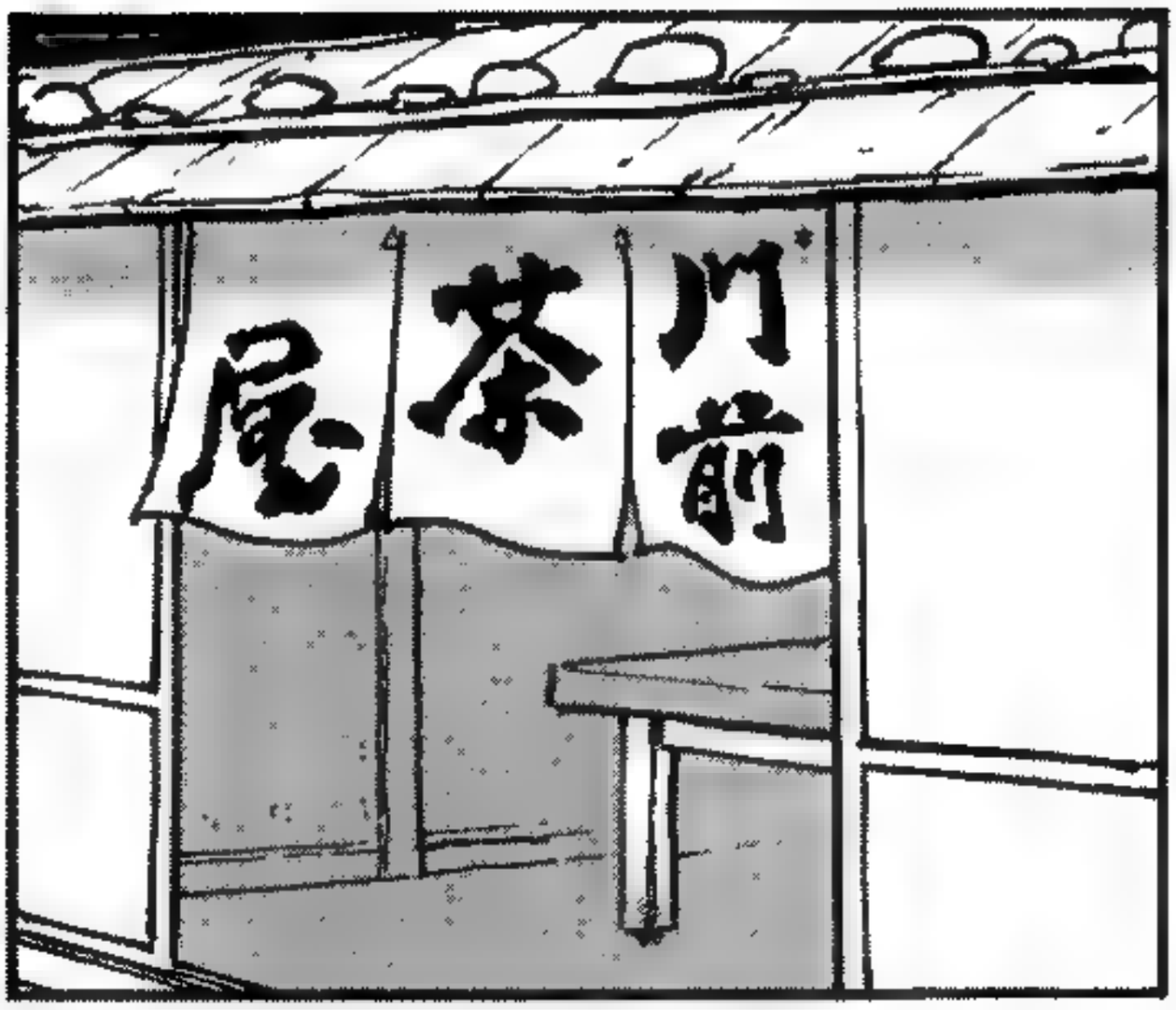


Aahh!
THAT'S TOO BAD; I DIDN'T WANT TO DO THIS...


I WISH EVERY ONE OF YOU...
WELL!

BUT... HE DIDN'T GIVE ME A CHOICE.


...A GREAT DAY!


茶屋
川前

THE BASTARD!

* CAFE

PLEASE! THIS MONEY WAS YOURS FROM THE BEGINNING! I ONLY GOT IT BACK FOR YOU.
WE COULD GET OUR MONEY BACK THANKS TO YOU. EVERY SINGLE BU OF IT.
ONCE AGAIN, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU!

EXCUSE MY MANNERS, BUT I WAS HUNGRY AND I TOOK IT WITHOUT PERMISSION...
I'D LIKE TO RETURN THE THREE RYO AND ONE BU THAT I TOOK FROM TAMEKICHI-SAN'S PURSE...

DON'T... I ALREADY KNOW THAT HE'S DEAD.

ONE MORE THING... ABOUT YOUR SON...

YOU'RE A WEIRD MAN.

I'D LIKE TO LEAVE A MESSAGE TO TAICHI.

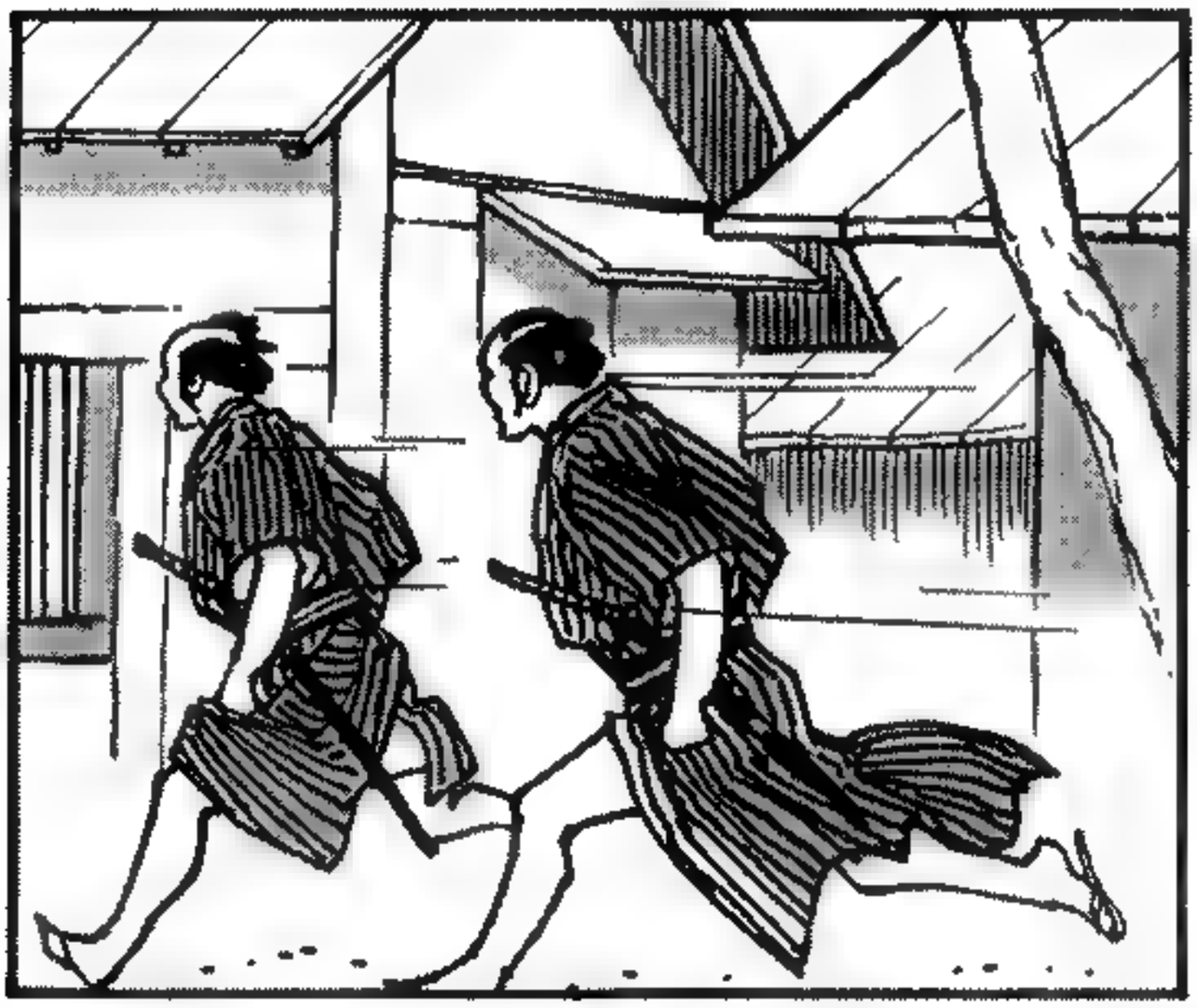
REALLY?

I KNEW IT RIGHT AFTER YOUR FIRST VISIT.

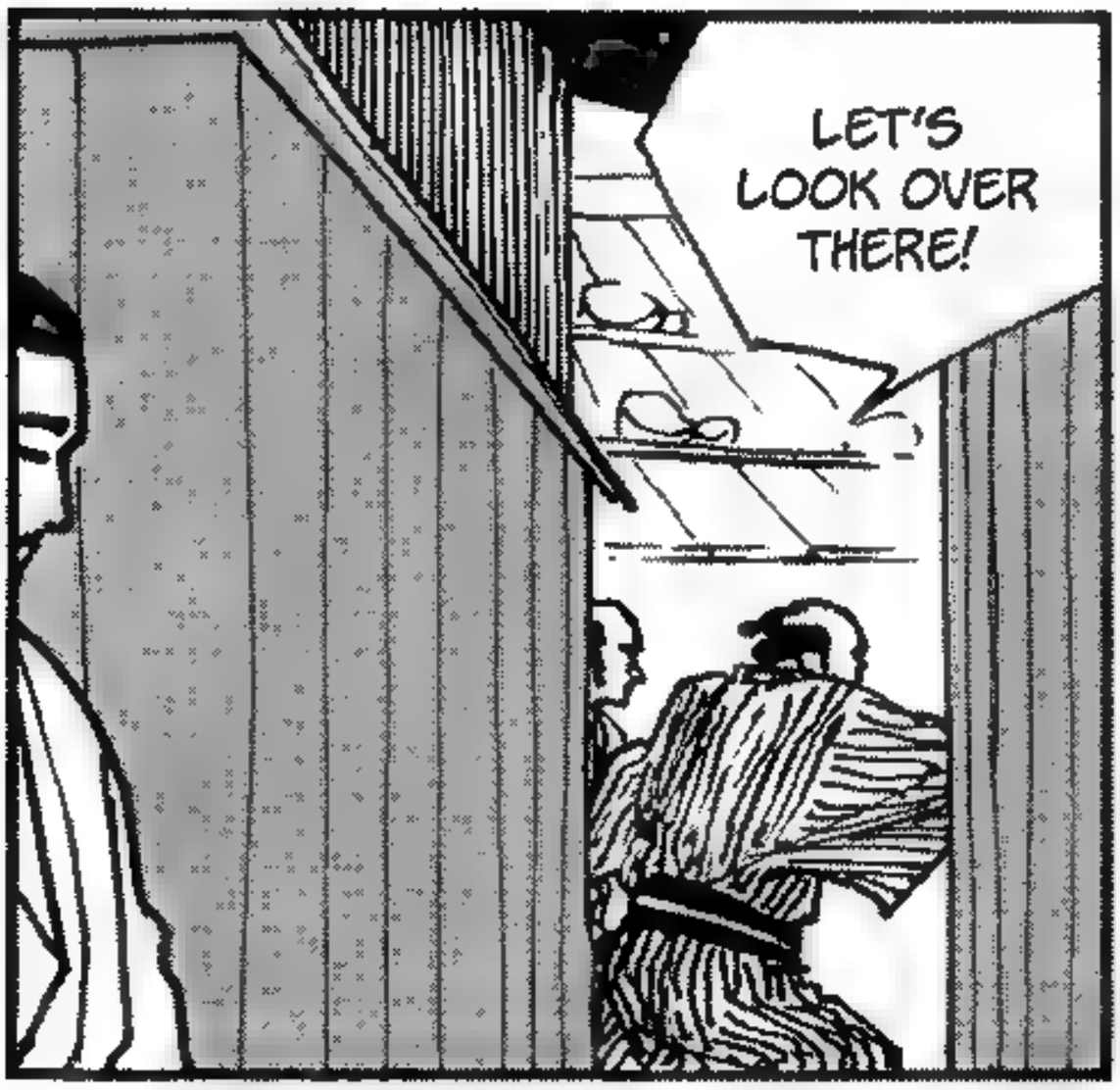
YES, I UNDER-STAND.

I HAVE TO LEAVE YOU NOW.

TELL HIM THAT HIS FRIEND, THE BLIND MASSEUR, FORBIDS HIM TO BECOME A YAKUZA...



THANKS, YOU TOO...
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, MADAM.


LET'S LOOK OVER THERE!

WHERE DID THAT BASTARD GO?!
HE'S NOT THERE!

Ah... MISTER!

HEY, KID!

GOOD.

NO.

Shh! ARE GONZO'S MEN STILL HERE?

WELL! I'M GONNA RUN AWAY, OF COURSE!

WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO, MISTER?

IF THEY COME BACK AND ASK YOU ABOUT ME, TELL THEM THAT YOU DIDN'T SEE ME, OKAY?

...

I TRUST YOU TO DO WHAT I'VE TOLD YOU.

YOU HAVE TO UNDER-STAND...

KID...

YES! IN HIS CASE, RUNNING AWAY IS BEING VIC-TORIOUS!
REALLY?

THE ONE WHO'S REALLY STRONG RUNS AWAY, JUST LIKE HIM!

ONE DAY, YOU WILL, KID... ONE DAY!
I DON'T UNDER-STAND.

WELL, IT'S NORMAL ...

AND HERE I AM, HUNGRY AGAIN!

*Pfhh...* I'M NOT SCARED OF THOSE BANDITS! BUT I RUN AWAY IN FRONT OF A LITTLE KID!

GOOD AFTER-NOON, MISTER.

*Ah!* THIS SHOULD DO IT!

I HAVE TO FIND SOME-WHERE TO HAVE A MEAL.

I HAVEN'T EATEN ANYTHING FOR A WHILE NOW.

WELL...

IT WAS REALLY GOOD! HOW MUCH IS IT?

MMIAAMM

YOU DON'T HAVE MONEY?! BUT... IT'S STEALING! YOU CAN'T DO THAT!

DAMN! I'VE COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN THAT I'M BROKE!

WHAT AM I GONNA DO?!

THAT'S FOR SURE! I WAS WONDERING HOW I COULD GET OUT OF IT!

*Hahaha!* WHAT AN UNPLEASANT SITUATION!

*Ah,* IT'S YOU, BONZE?

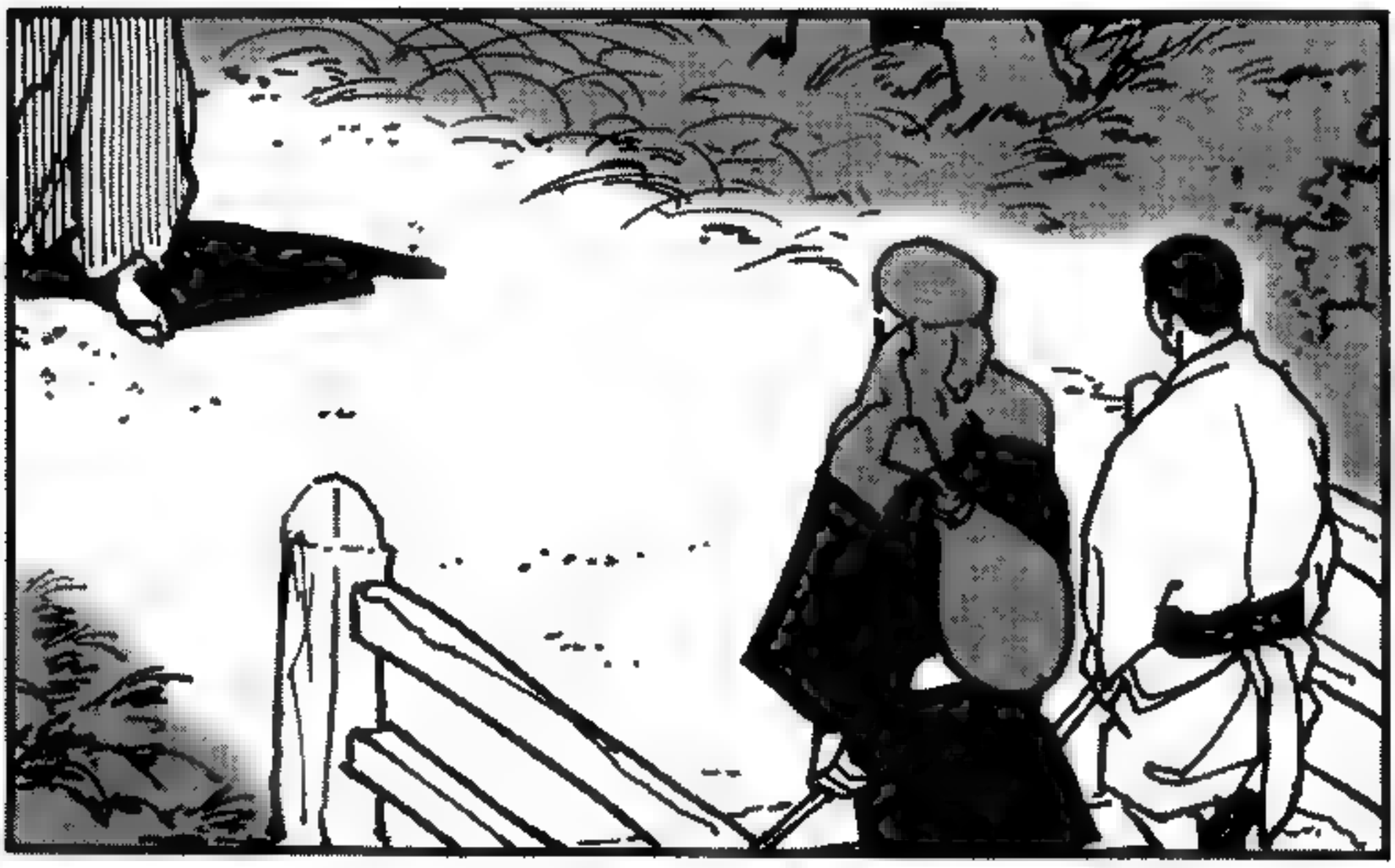
WHAT'S GOING ON?

GOOD! THE ROAD WILL BE MORE PLEASANT IF WE'RE TWO! DON'T YOU THINK SO?

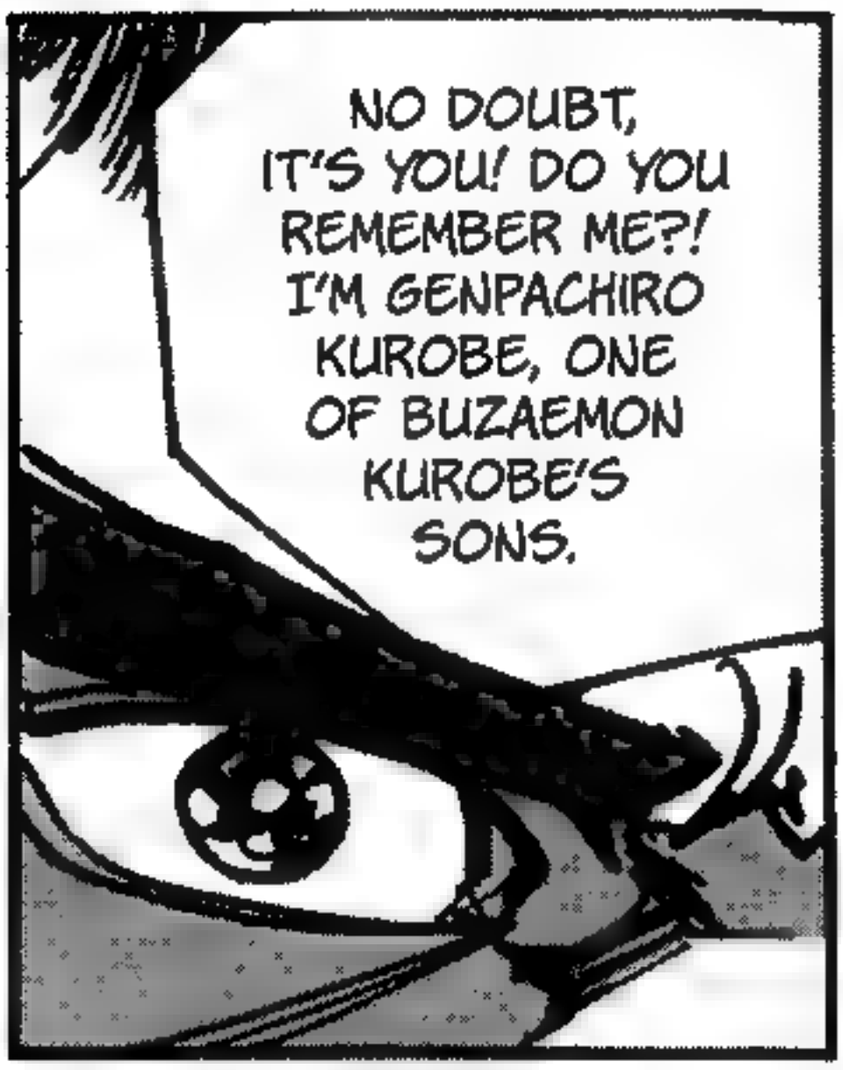
NO.

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE ALSO LEAVING THIS VILLAGE... AM I WRONG?

...WHAT'S GOING ON?



HERE YOU ARE, AT LAST!


NO DOUBT, IT'S YOU! DO YOU REMEMBER ME?! I'M GENPACHIRO KUROBE, ONE OF BUZAEMON KUROBE'S SONS.

I'M HERE TO AVENGE HIM! I CHALLENGE YOU TO A DUEL!

YOUR VOICE... SOUNDS LIKE YOUR FATHER'S...
YES...

DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO...
I HAVE NO WEAPON AND I'M NOT REALLY AFRAID OF DYING...

Haha! DON'T COUNT ON ME TO SPARE YOU!!

AAA!!!

SCHLIIINNG

HEY!

...AND UNARMED.

THIS BONZE IS BLIND...

STEP BACK, THIS IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS...

WHY DID YOU TRY TO STOP ME?!

I DON'T WANT TO BE THE WITNESS OF AN ASSASSINATION.

BUT...YOU'RE A REALLY GOOD SWORDSMAN! YOU COULD HIT HIM EVEN THOUGH I STEPPED IN...

HOW'S THAT?!

THAT'S THE ONLY THING YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND. IF YOU DON'T STOP FIGHTING, YOU'LL MAKE ENEMIES AND THIS WILL ONLY LEAD YOU TO YOUR DEATH...BELIEVE ME, I'M THE PERFECT EXAMPLE!

A BLIND MAN MUST PROTECT HIMSELF ABOVE ALL...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I'M THE CAUSE OF THIS. I HAVE TO PAY FOR WHAT I DID!

I'M JUST A POOR BLIND MAN, BUT I CAN'T LET SOMEONE KILL YOU WITHOUT MOVING AN INCH! DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT WE SHOULD PROTECT EACH OTHER?

STEP BACK, BLIND MAN!!

WHAT?! THEN, YOU TOO, YOU...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW MY STORY... ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT YOU CAN'T LET YOURSELF BE TEMPTED TO USE YOUR SWORDSTICK! THAT'S WHAT I SHOULD'VE DONE TOO!

WHAT?!

SOJURO TADA! I'M GONNA KILL YOU NOW!

*HEY,* MISTER ONZE! WHAT'S HAP-PENING TO YOU ALL OF A SUDDEN?

YOU'RE ADVISING ME TO GIVE UP MY SWORDSTICK?!

IF YOU ONLY COUNT...ON YOUR SWORDSTICK...ONE DAY, YOU'LL FACE...THE SAME SITUATION AND THE SAME END AS ME! GIVE IT UP! AND ACT...WITH COWARDICE...

ONE DAY, MAYBE... YOU WILL ...

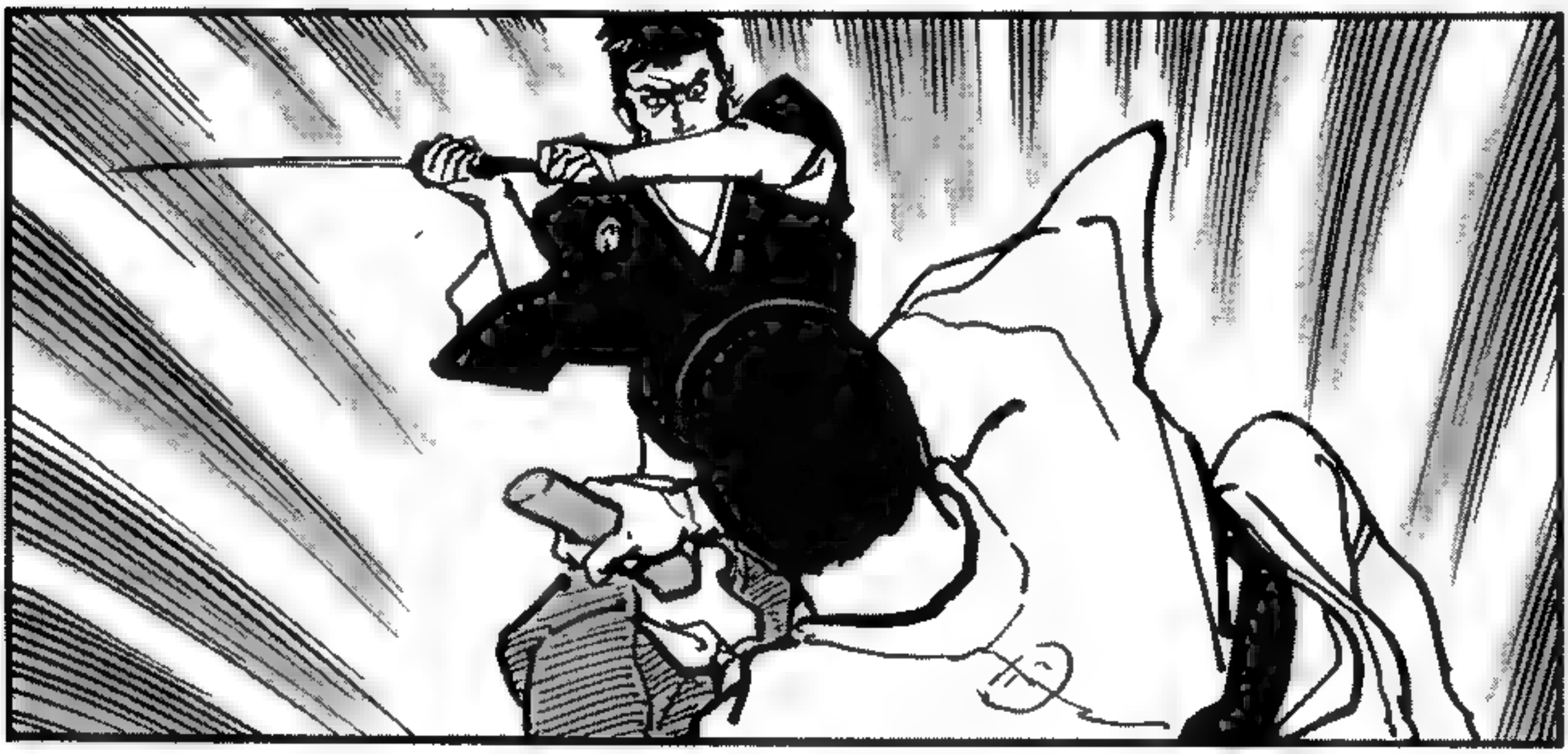
I DON'T UNDER-STAND...

I SAID... STEP BACK!

STEP BACK !!

GRAAR!

ZZZZZAF



# HYAAH!!

VRLATCH

DOOM

DEAR BONZE...

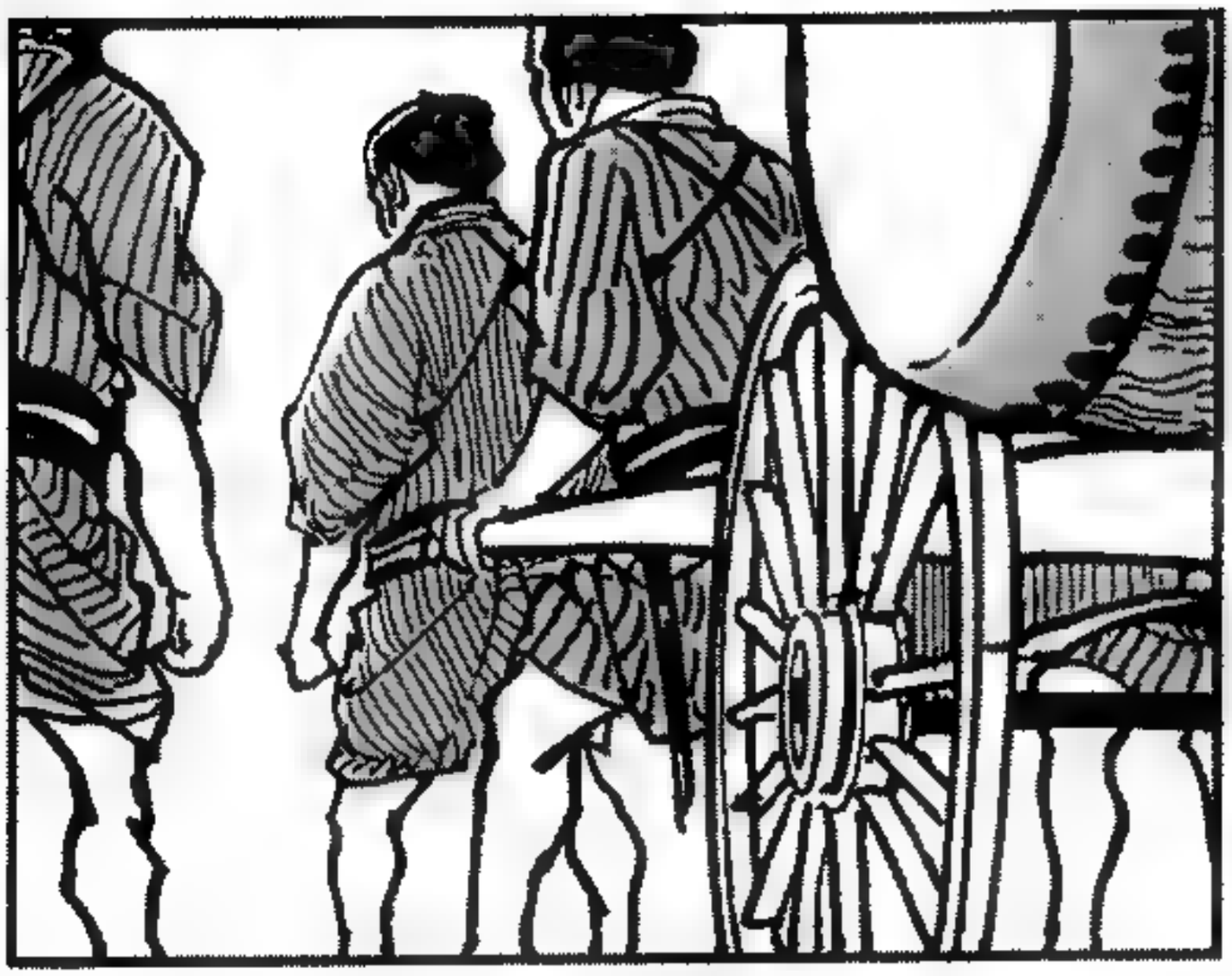
...ON MY SWORDSTICK?

...SO, ACCORDING TO YOU, I'LL BE CUT DOWN ONE DAY... IF I ONLY COUNT...

TU.. TU.. TU.. TU..

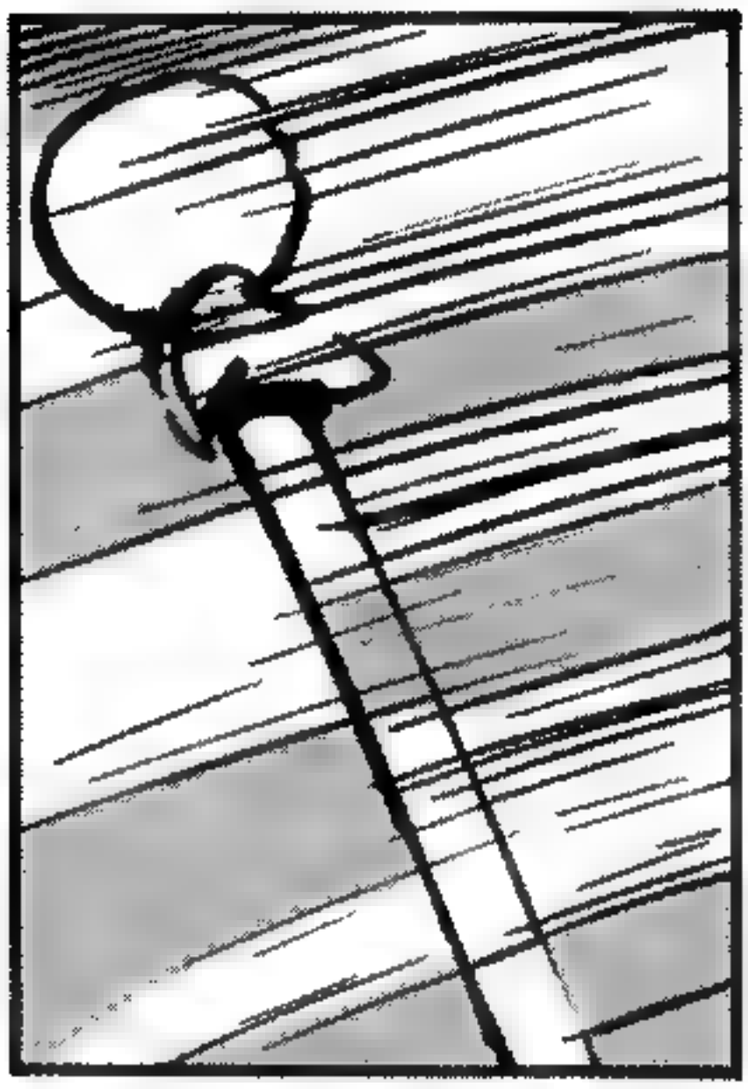
HE'S THERE!

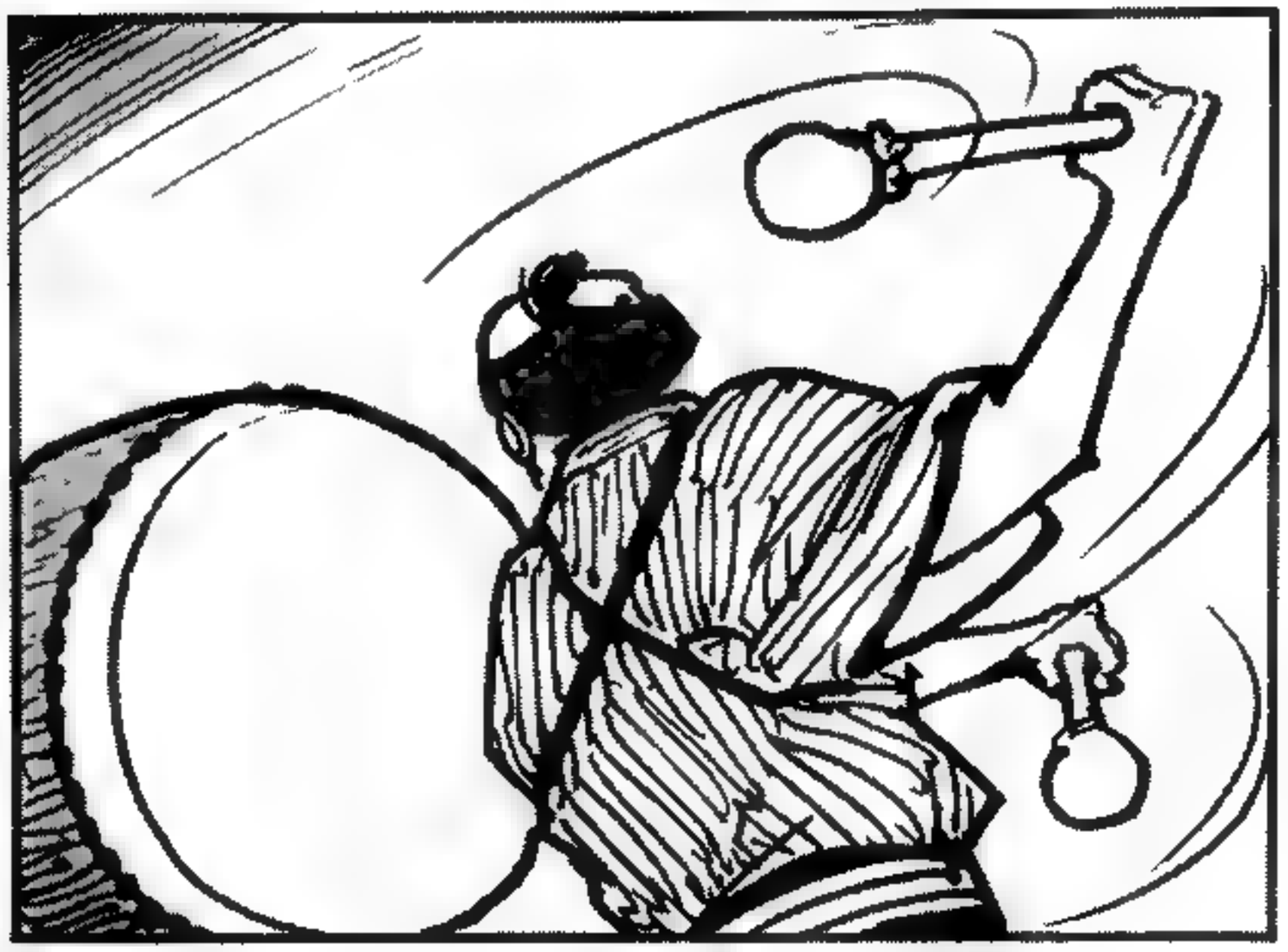
DOW DOW



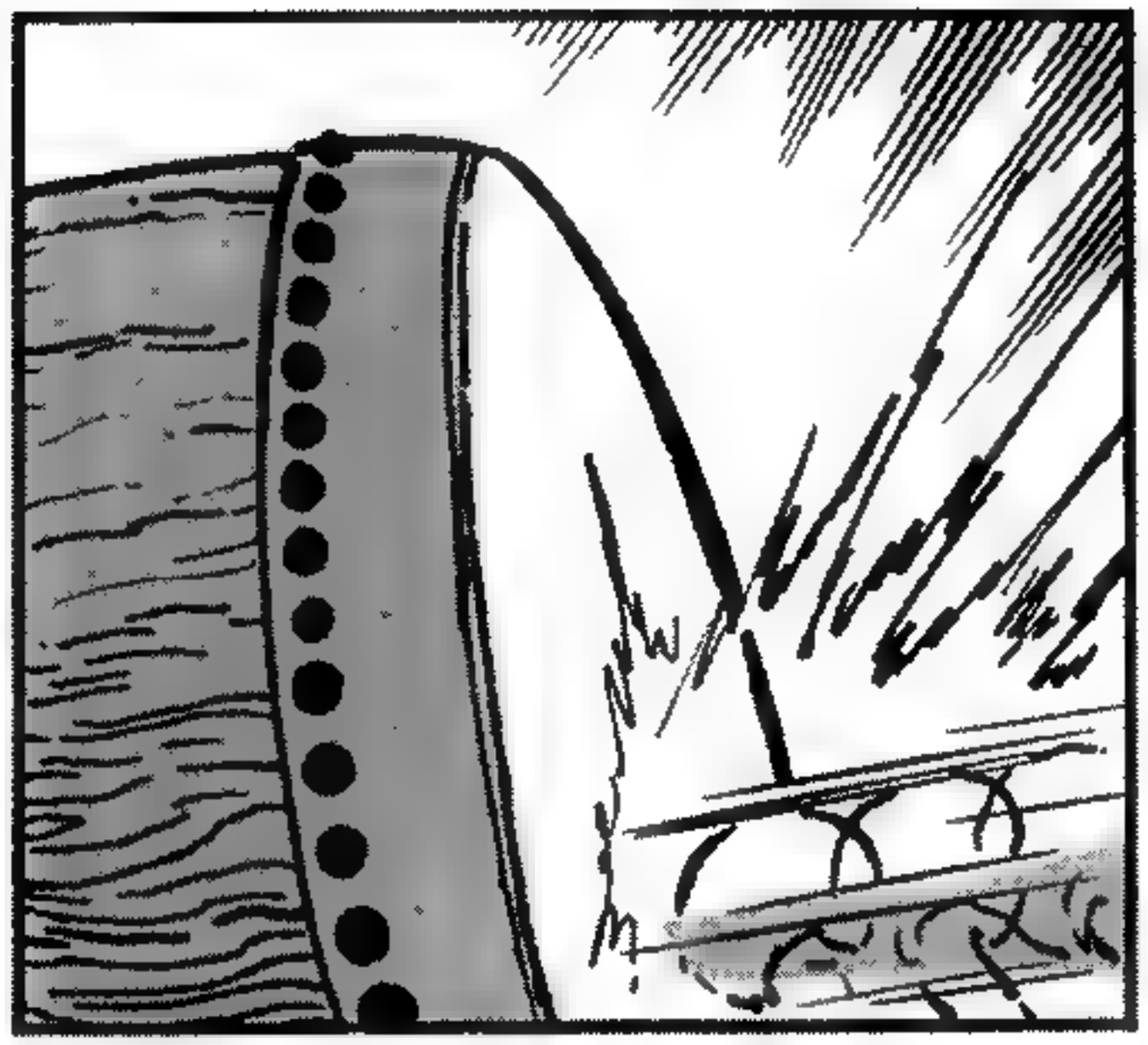
WHAT ?!

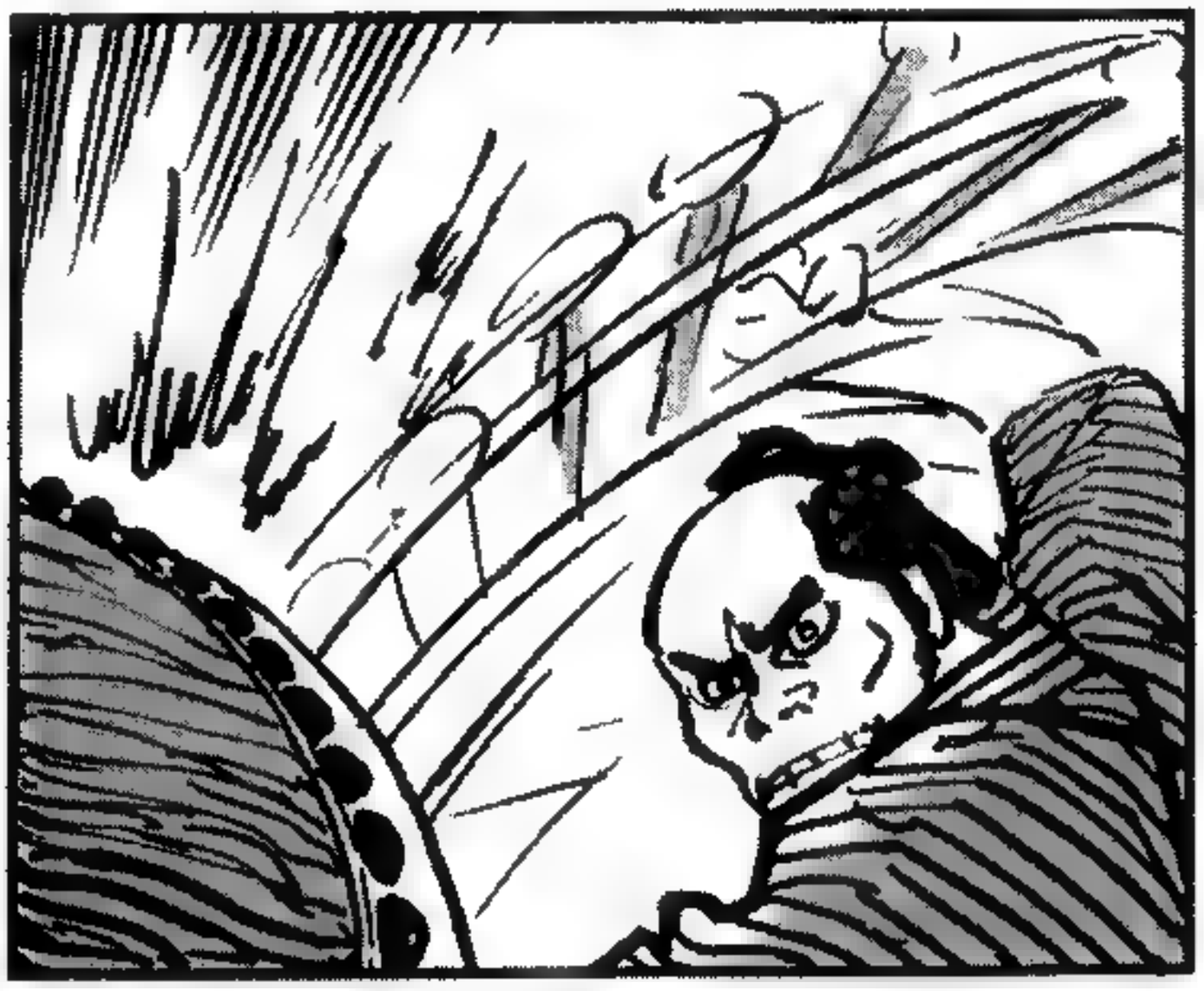
WE'RE HERE TO AVENGE OUR BOSS! DEATH IS AWAITING YOU. RESIGN YOUR-SELF!
HEY, BLIND MAN!





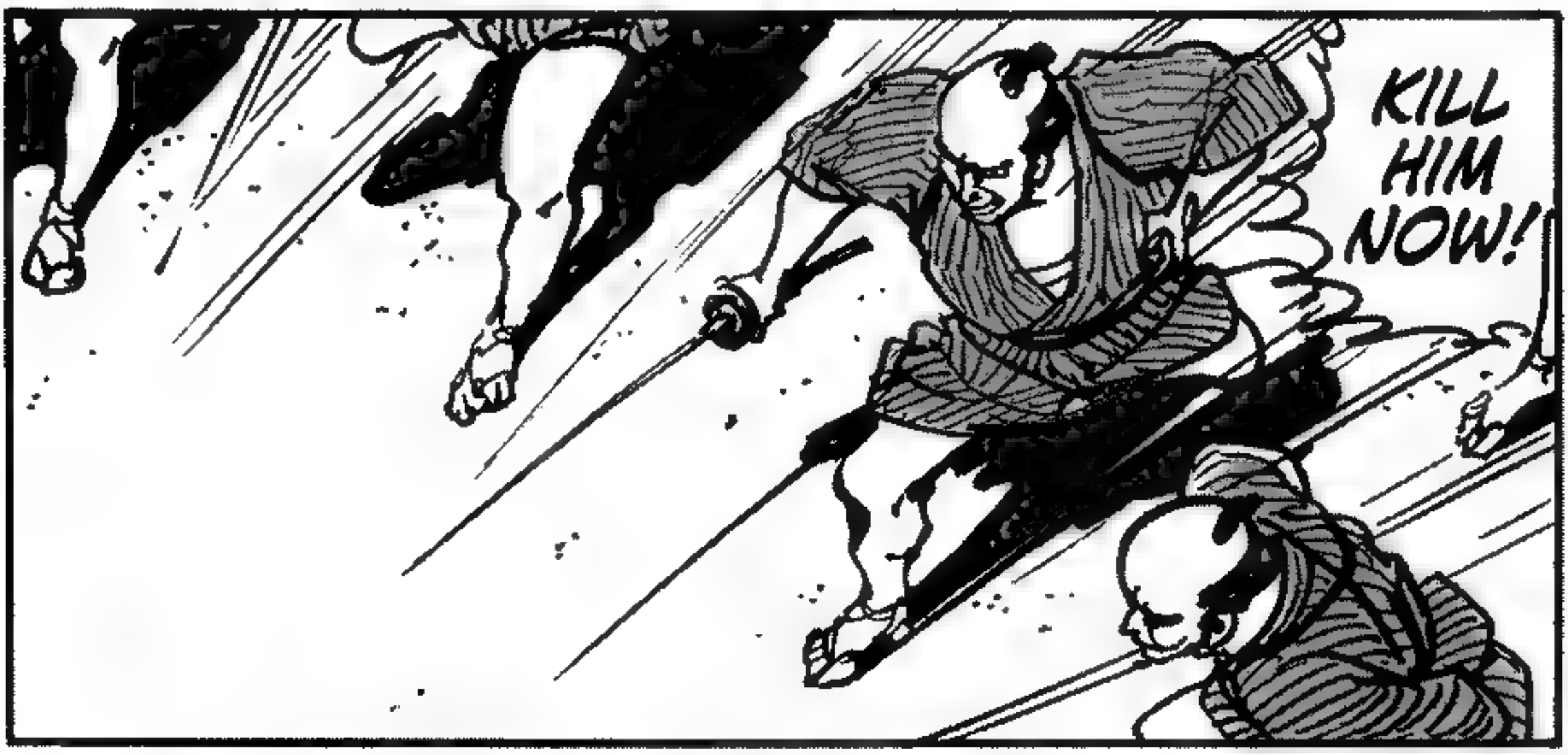
BOOM



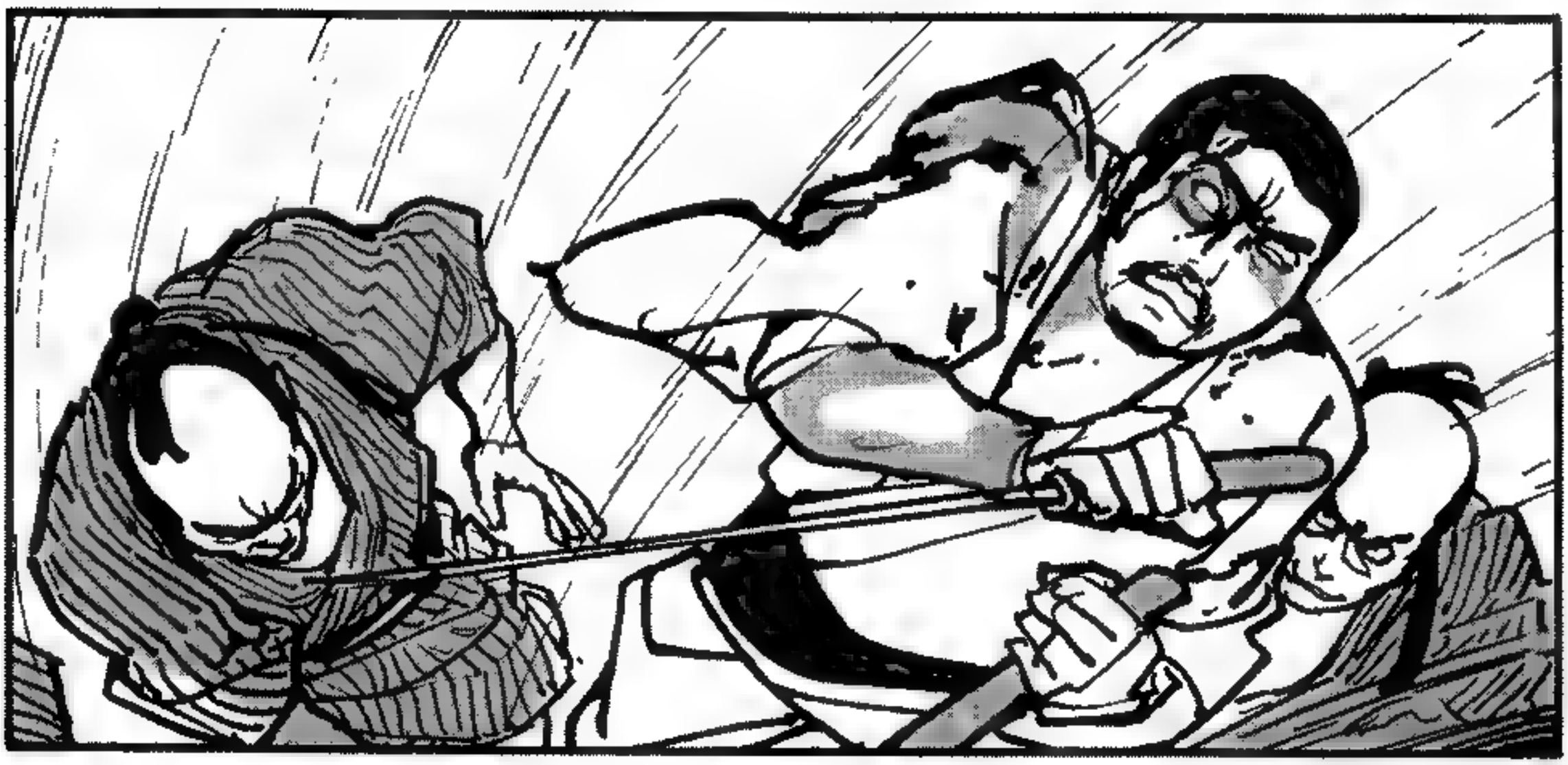



BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

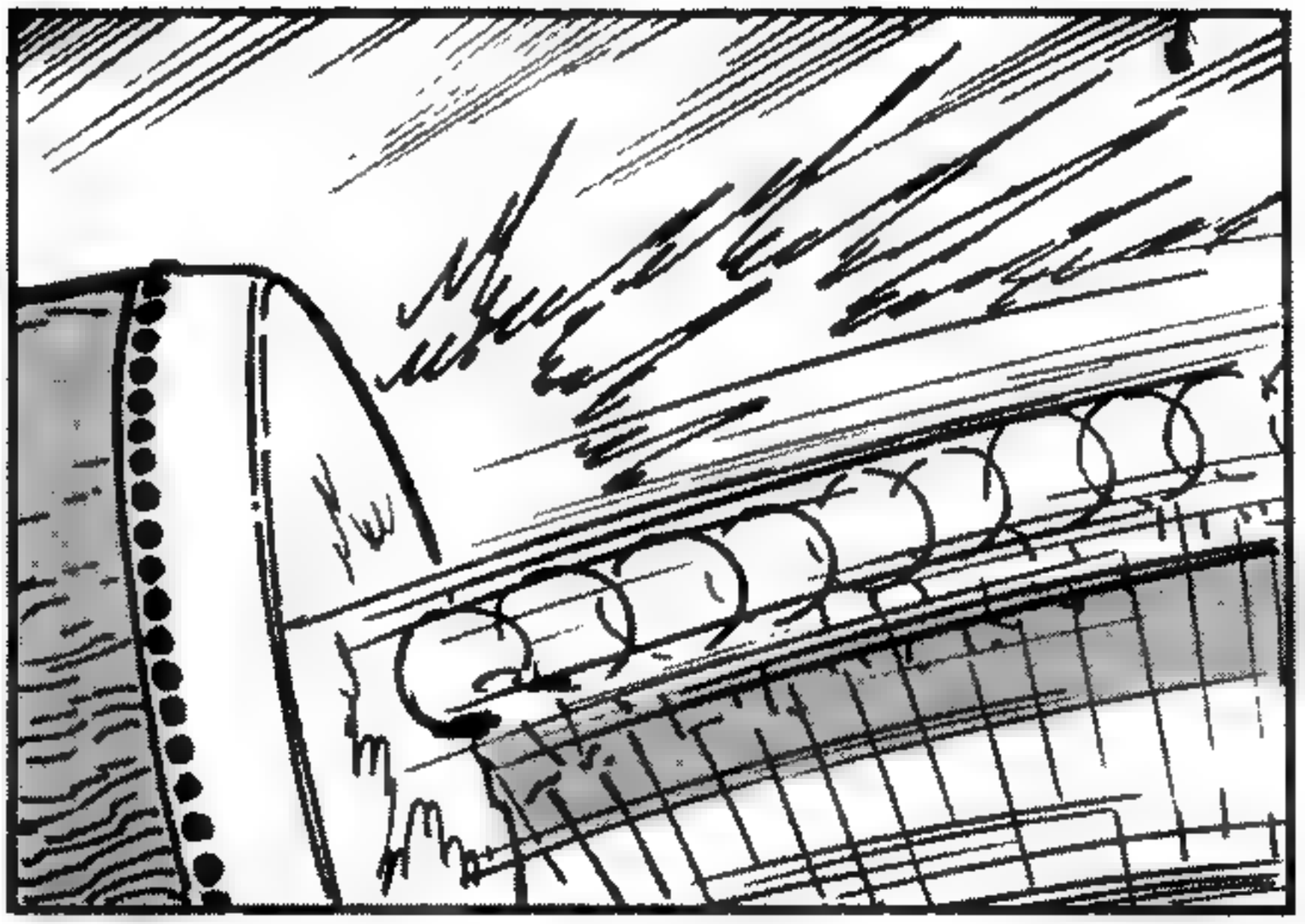
AAH!

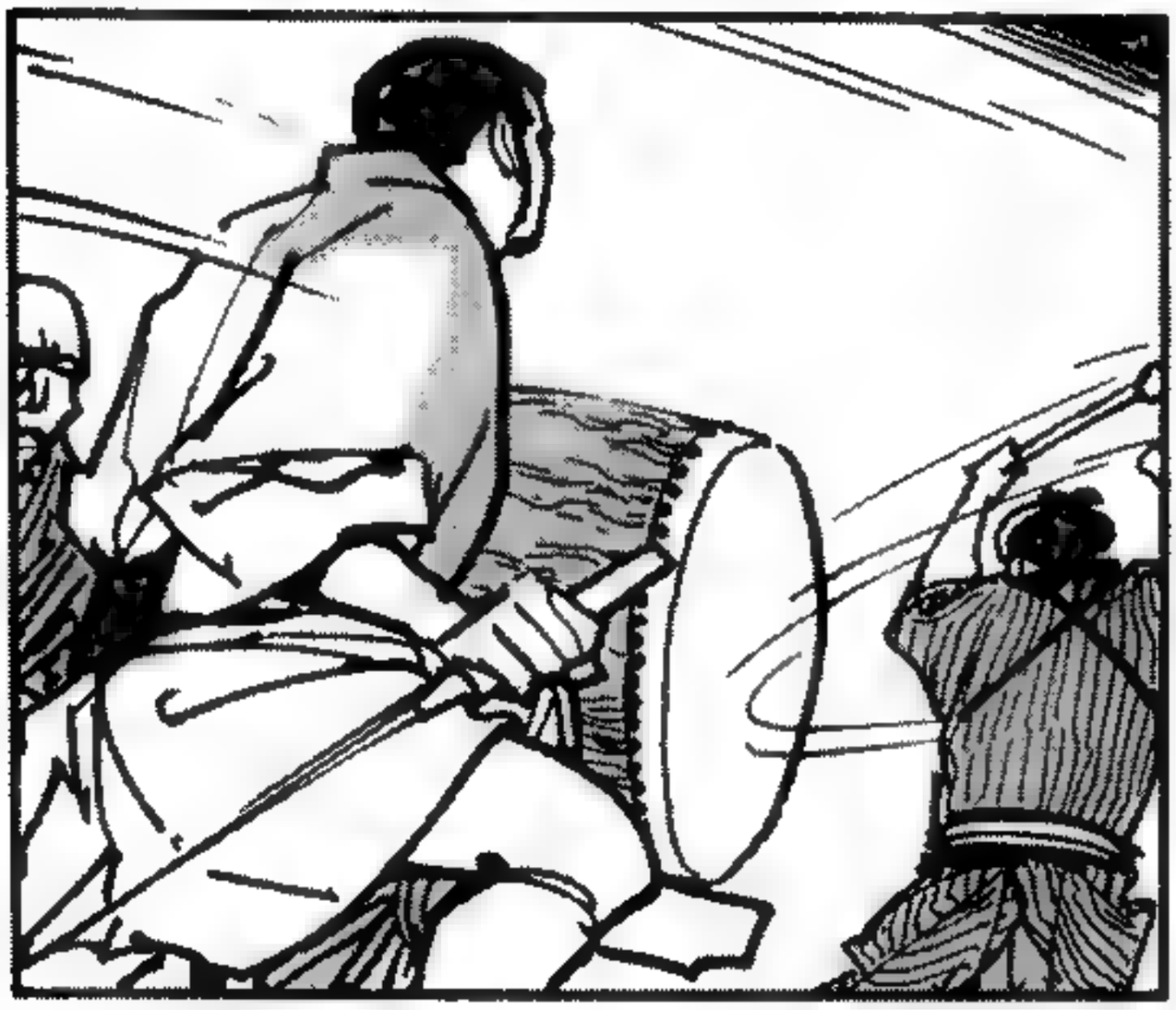

KILL HIM NOW!

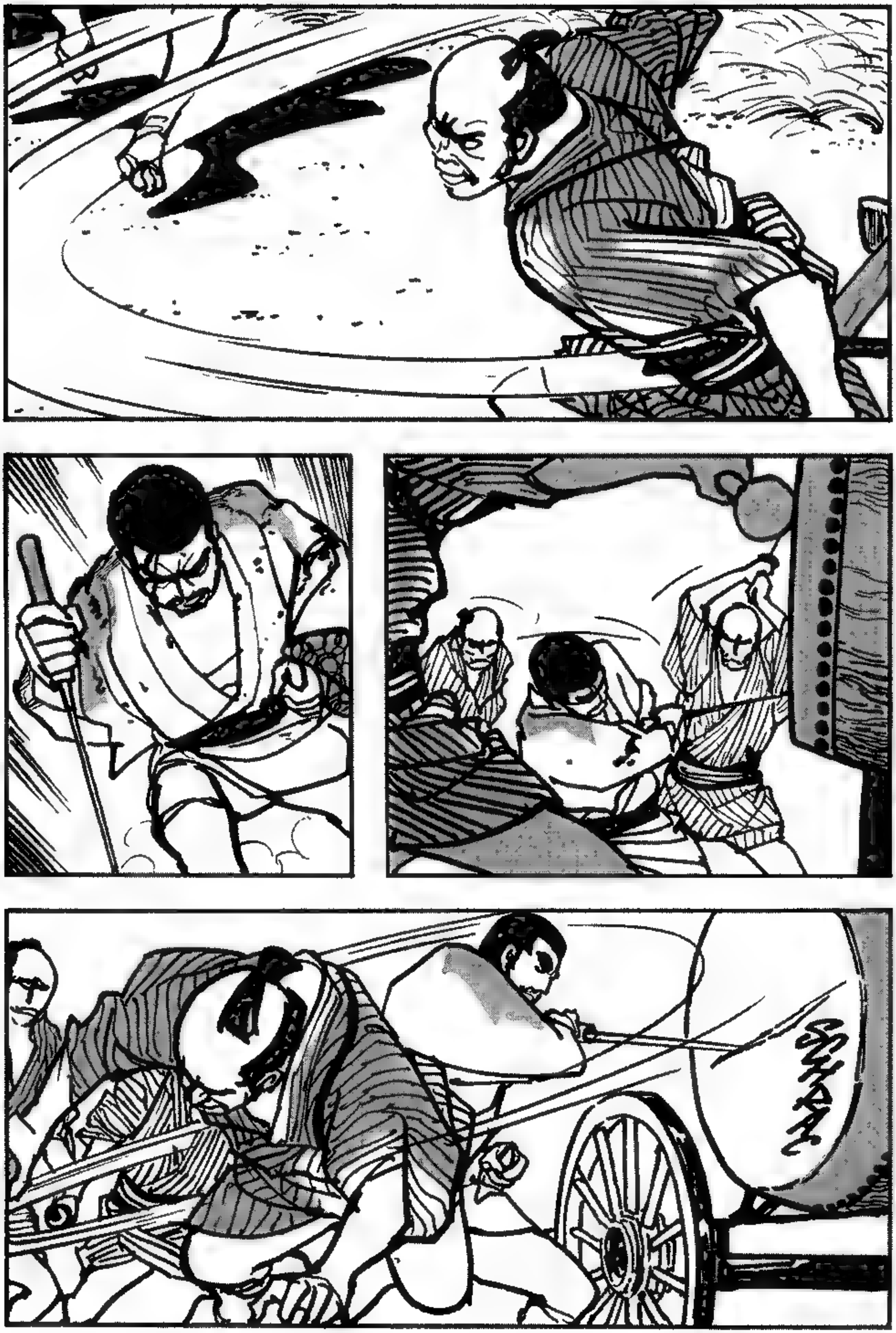
YAAAHH!!

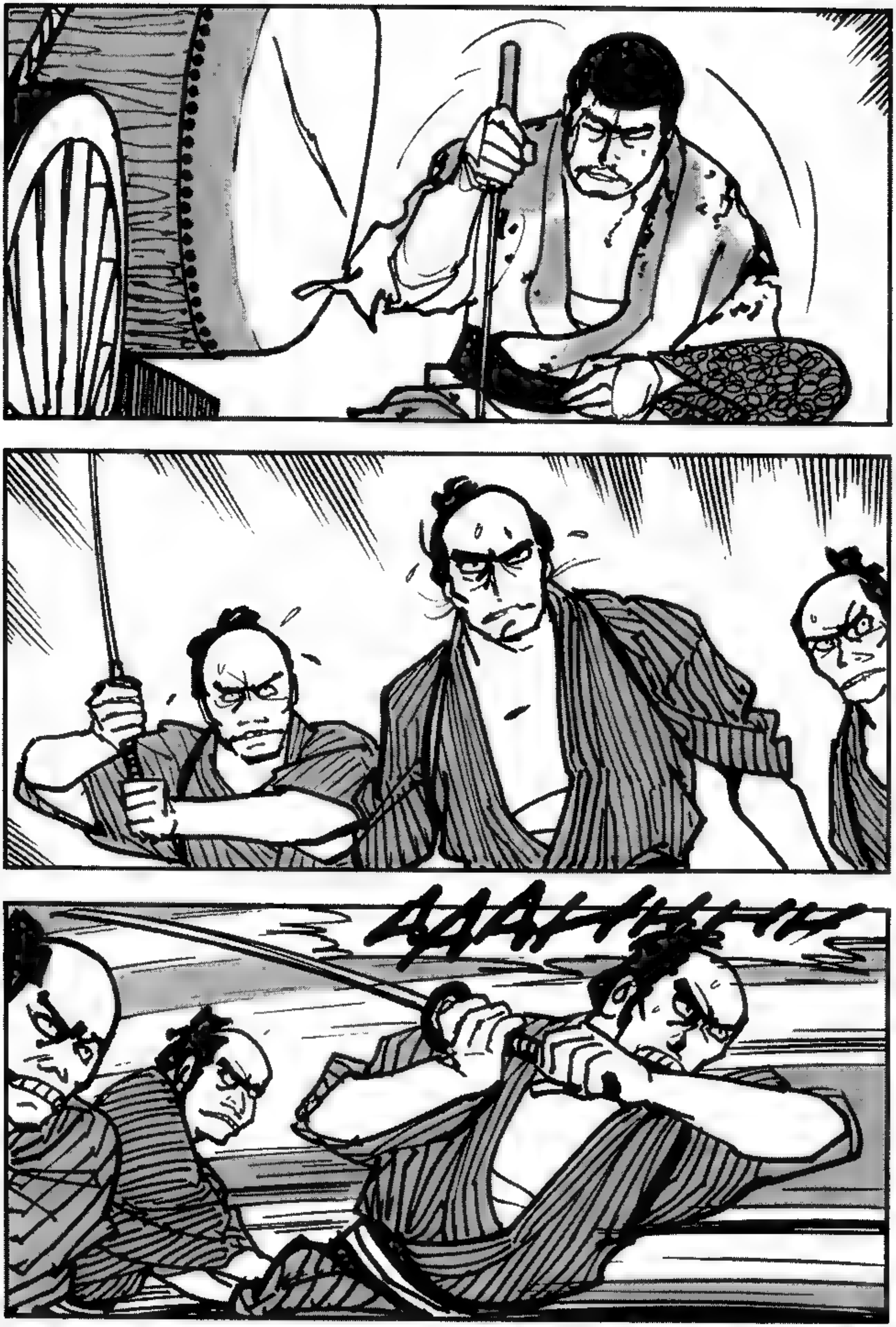


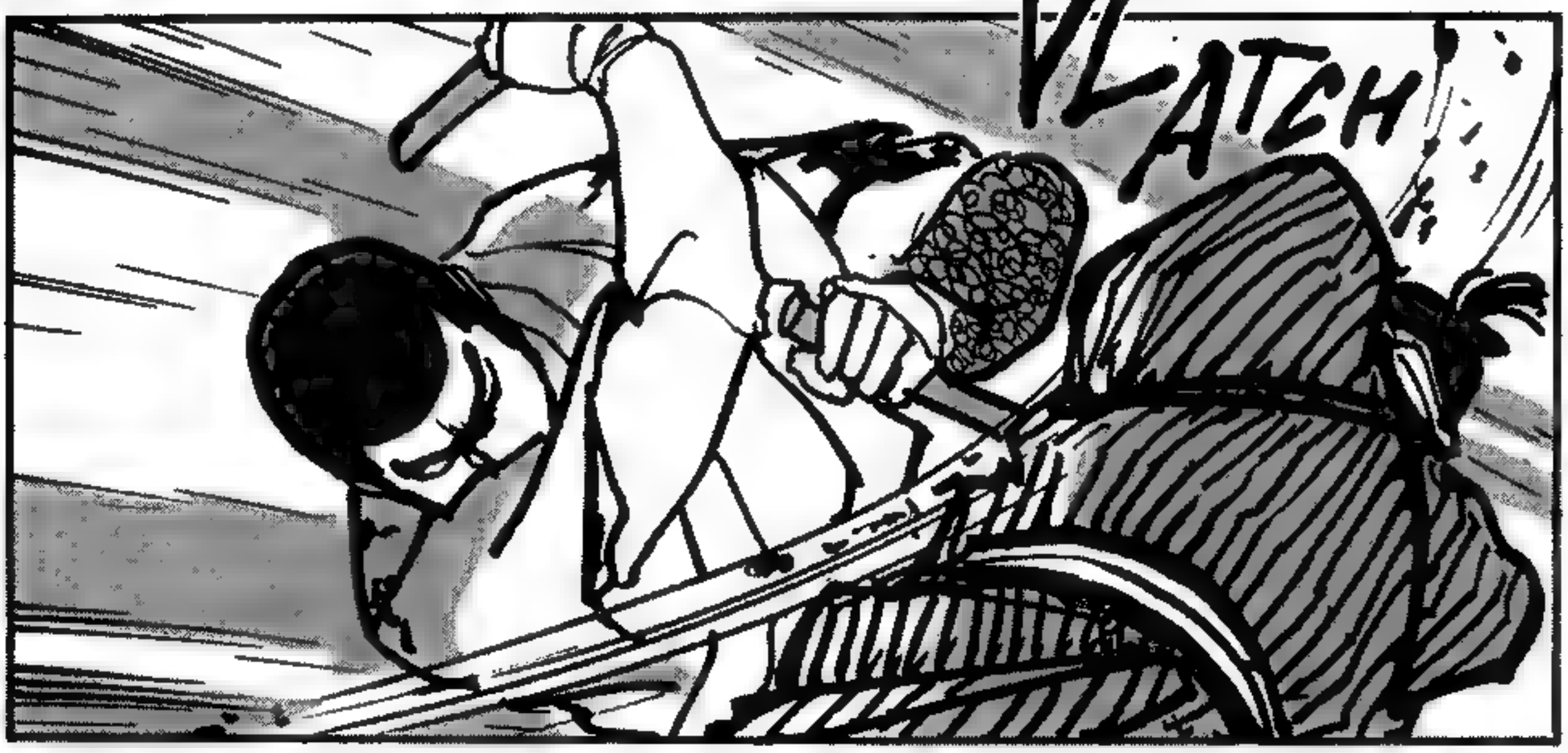
Whoa

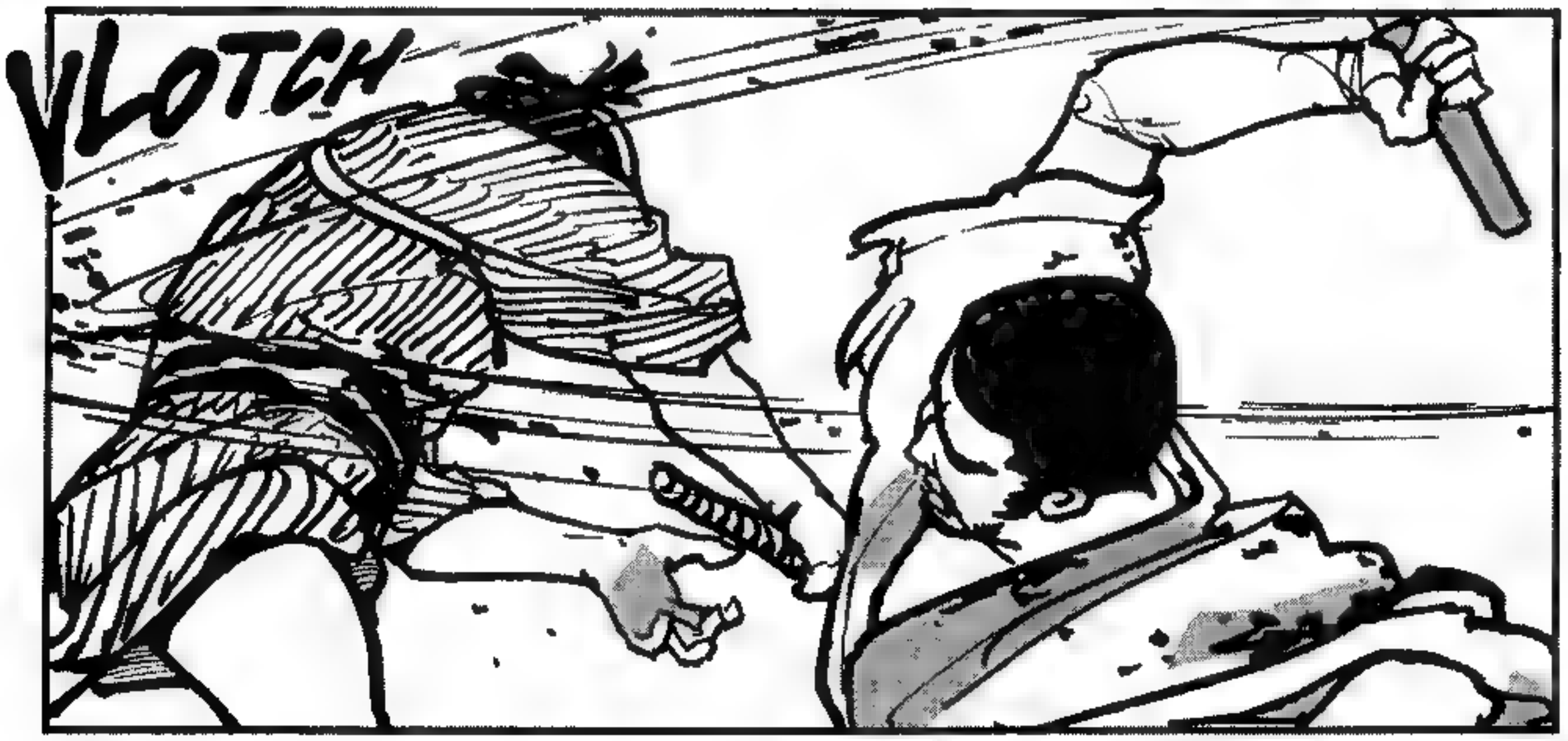






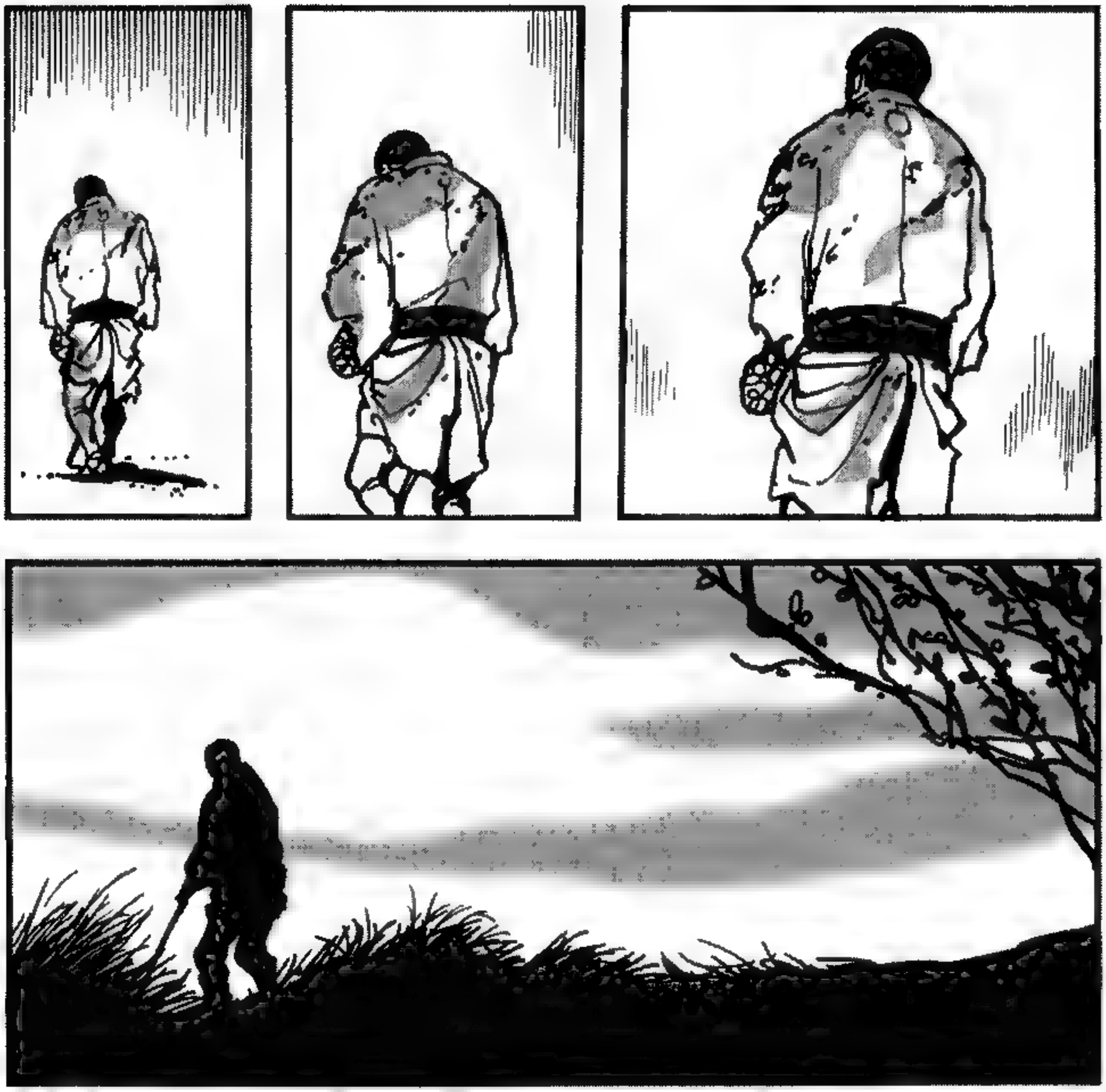



VLATCH


VLOTCH

ARRRR

BDM



WAS IT MY DESTINY? WAS I SEALED BY A FATE THAT
I COULDN'T GET AWAY FROM? IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY SWORDSTICK,
DEATH WOULD'VE ALREADY TAKEN ME. DESPITE THE ADVICE OF
THE BONZE, HOW COULD I LEAVE THAT DEAR COMPANION?
ONLY DEATH WILL SEPARATE US FROM EACH OTHER...

# THE BALLAD OF ZATOICHI

-END-

# ZATOICHI'S PILGRIMAGE

THAT SUMMER, AFTER CROSSING THE SEA, ZATOICHI SET FOOT ON THE ISLAND OF SHIKOKU IN SANUKI'S FIEF*.

* THE ACTUAL KANAGAWA DISTRICT.

I WISH I COULD TAKE MY SKIN OFF...

DAMN... IT'S SO HOT!

I'M SO SWEATY!

PFFHH...

ZATOICHI! ON GUARD!

BE CAREFUL! HE'S THERE!

YOU'RE GONNA DIE!!

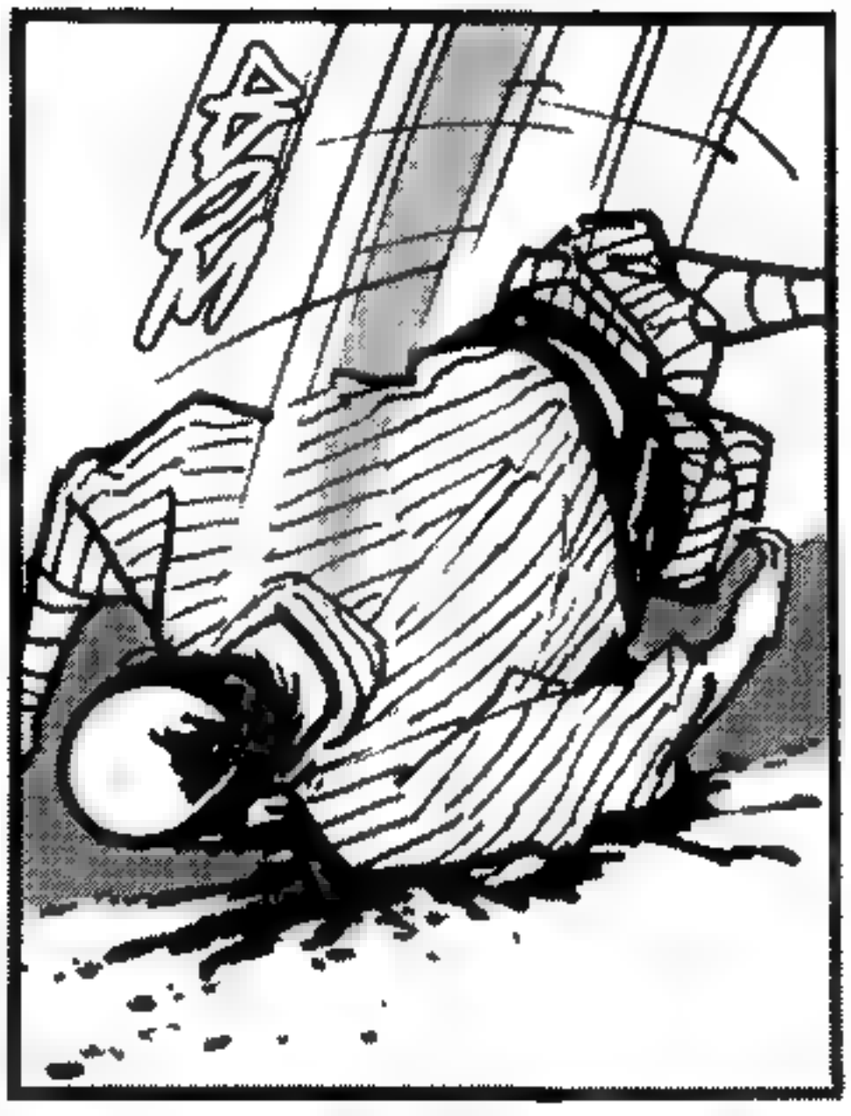
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME, GENTLEMEN?

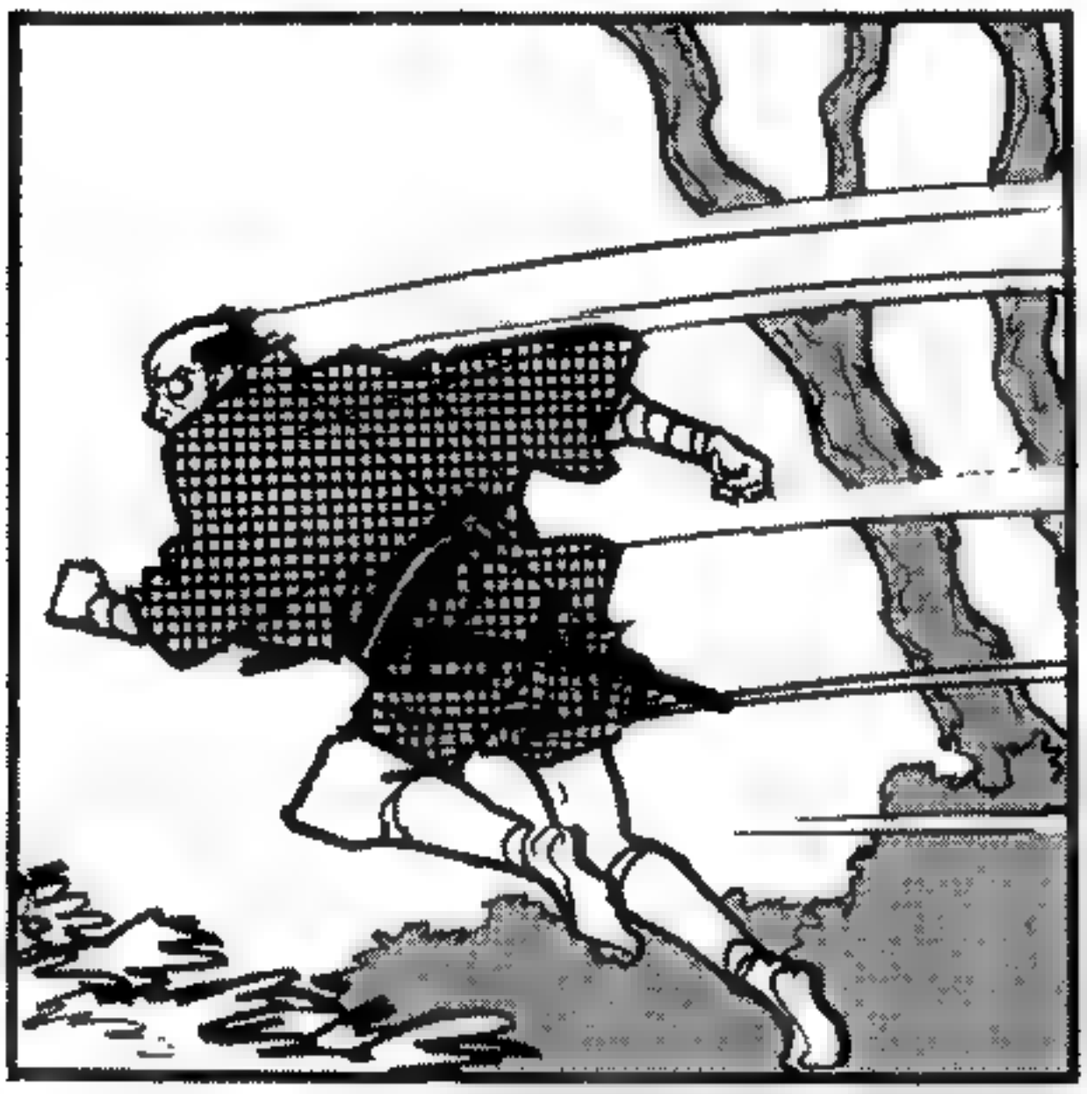
...YOU SEE, I DON'T WANT TO KILL YOU!

I ADVISE YOU TO STOP HARASSING ME...

SHUT UP, DAMN BLIND MAN!!

SCHRAC





Aah...

Mm... I THINK I GET IT NOW...

HOW COULD THEY FOLLOW ME UP TO HERE?!

THEY MUST BE THE REMAINDER OF THE BANDITS I HAD TO DEAL WITH IN THE LAST TOWN I WENT TO...

SERIGAZAWA? SO YOU'RE FROM THIS ISLAND.

I'M EIGORO, FROM SERIGAZAWA.

YOU'RE ZATOICHI, AREN'T YOU?

AND YOU SEEM TO HAVE DRAWN YOUR SWORD!

AH! EIGORO-SAN, YOU'RE ALREADY HERE?!

...I DON'T THINK ANYONE WILL TRY TO PICK A QUARREL WITH ME. I HAVE NO ENEMY HERE.

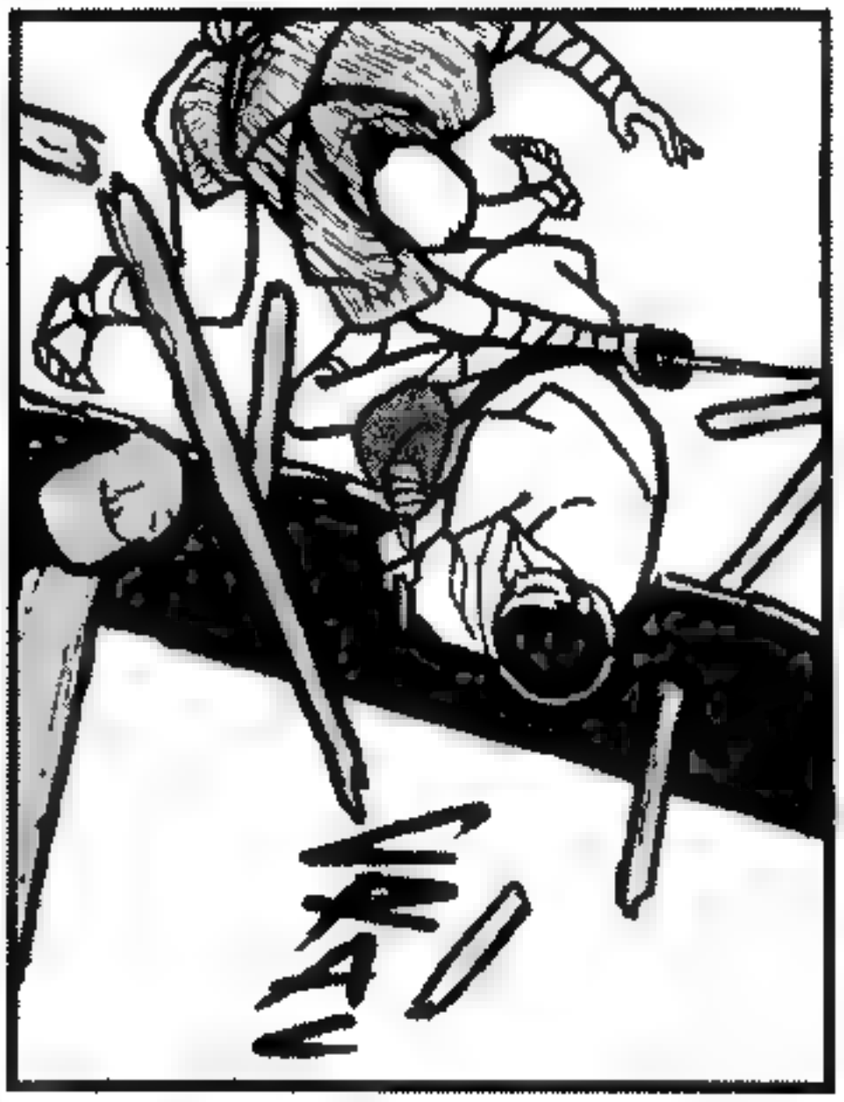
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE COME HERE...

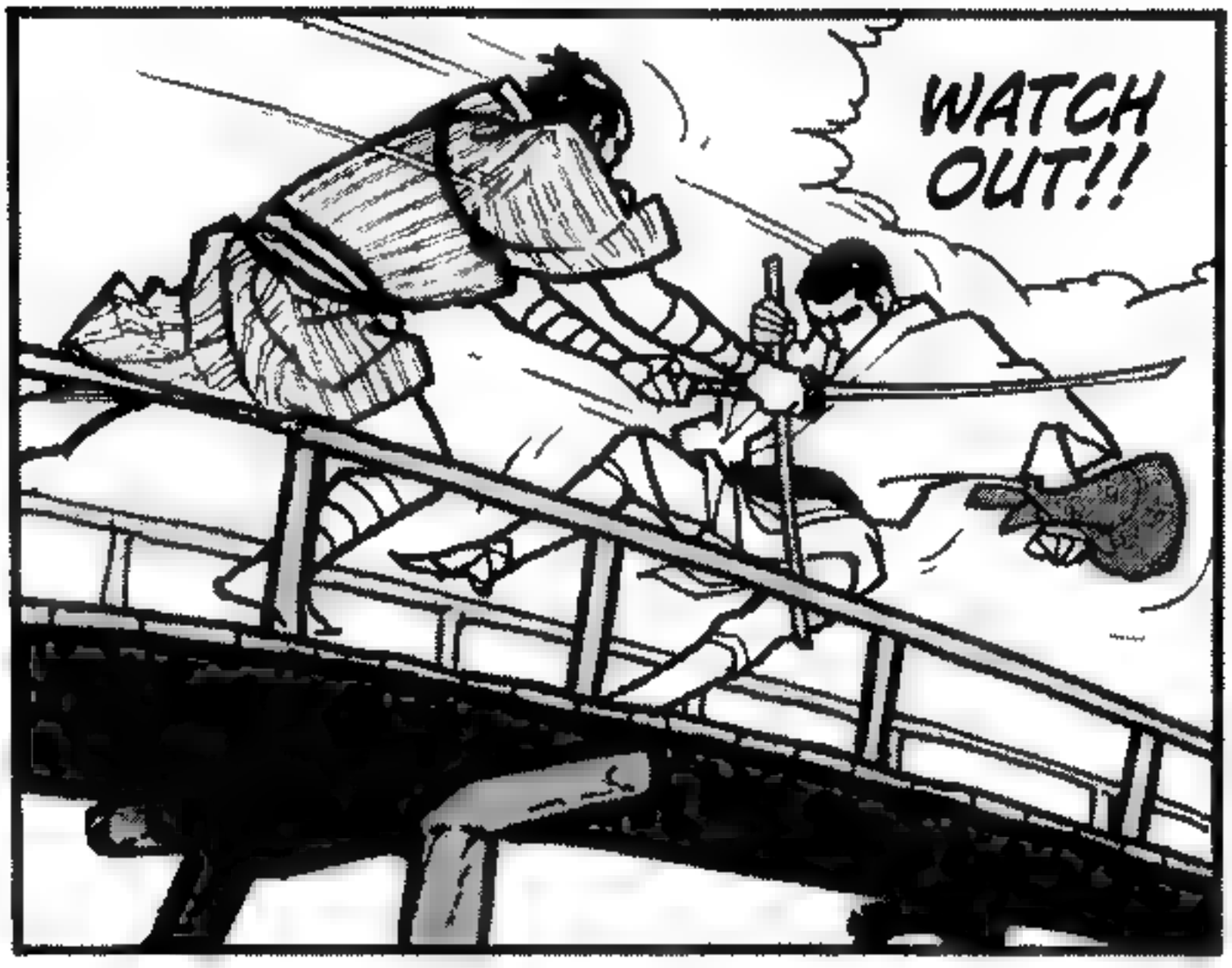
I JUST WANT TO RENDER HOMAGE TO KONPIRA* AND PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF EVERYONE I HAD TO CUT DOWN UNTIL NOW. THEN, I INTEND TO MAKE A PILGRIMAGE TO...

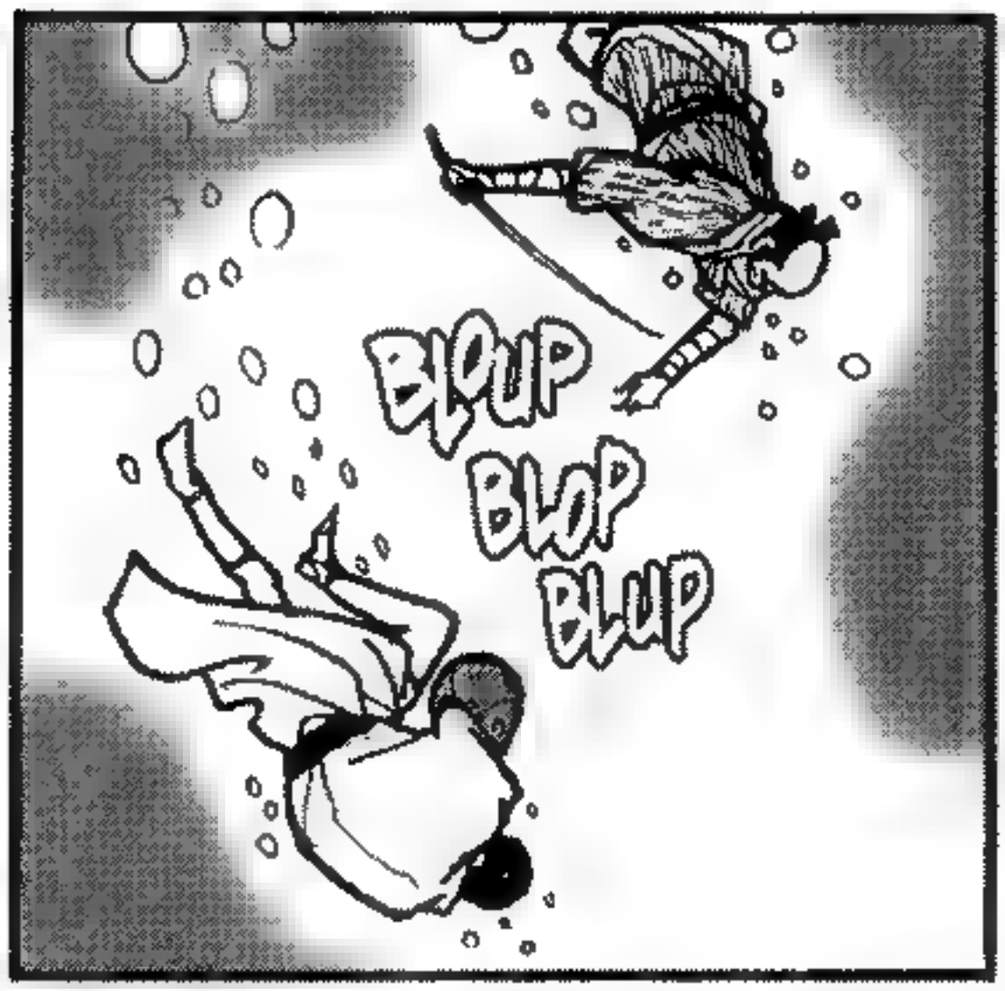
WAIT...I HAVE NO IDEA WHY YOU WOULD ATTACK ME LIKE THIS! I'M NOT HERE TO CROSS SWORDS WITH ANYONE, WHOEVER HE IS!

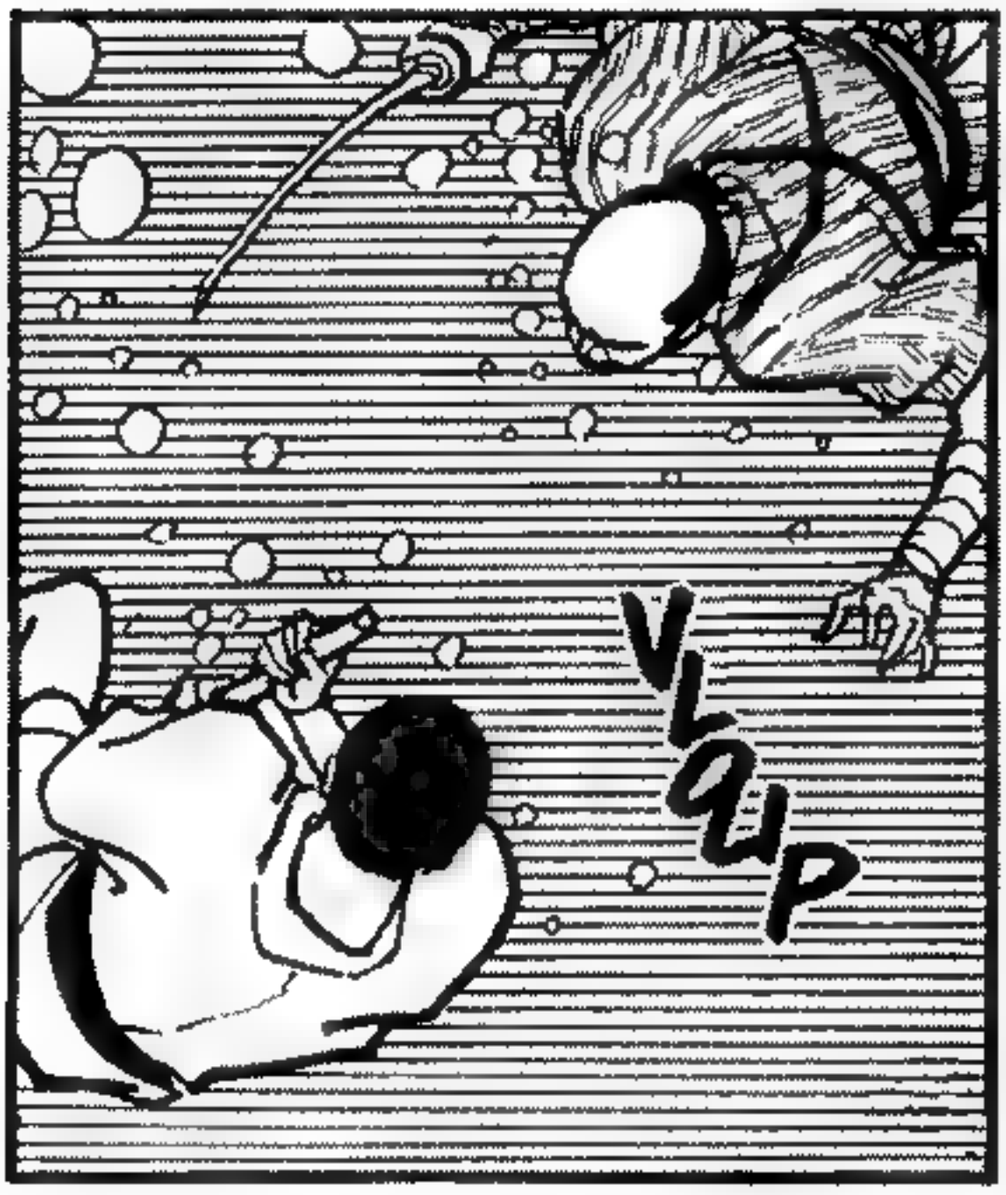
NO ARGUING !!

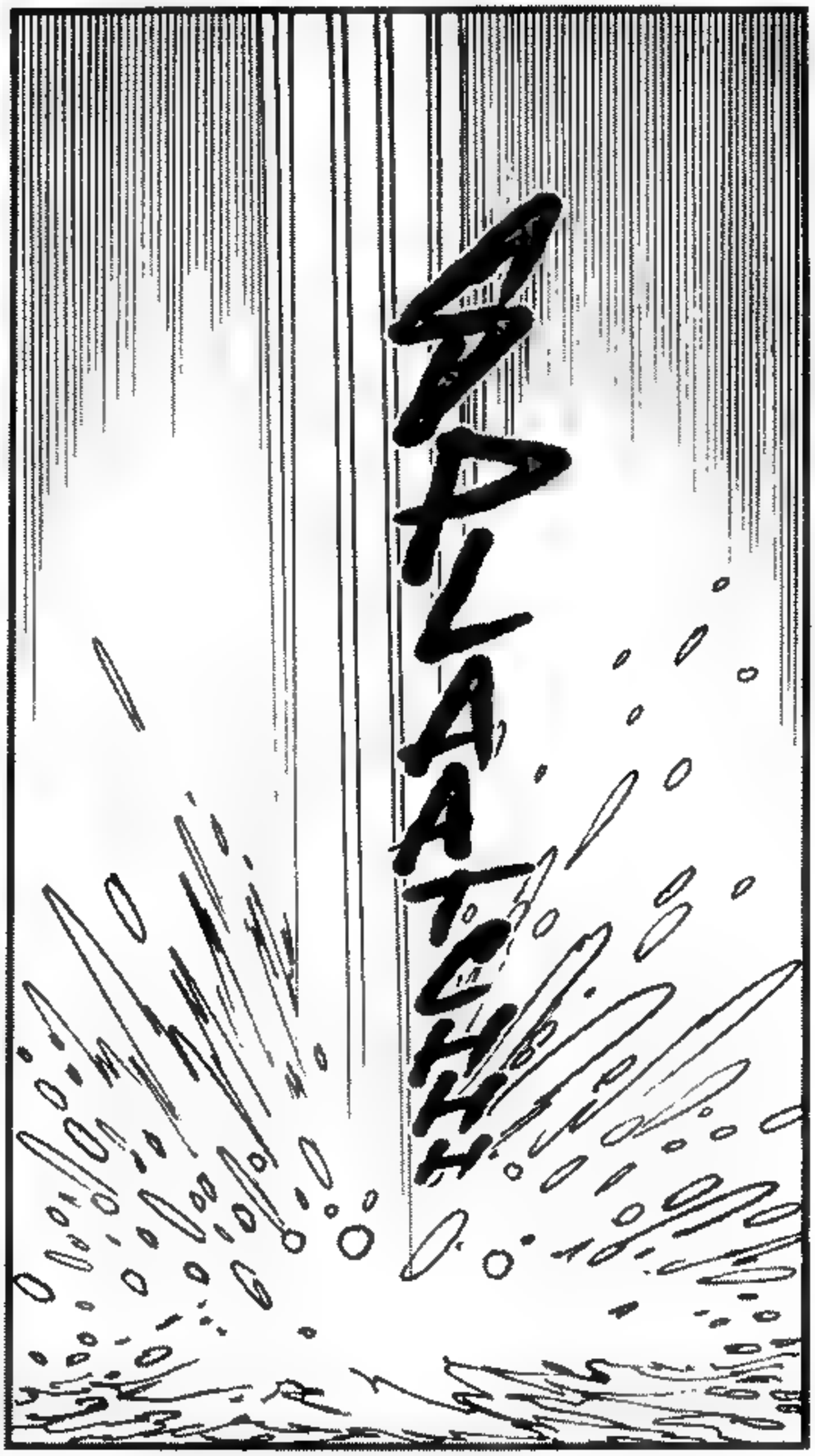
* KONPIRA . GOD INSURING SAFETY TO SAILORS, REVERED AT KOTOHIRA, IN THE DISTRICT OF KAGAWA.




WATCH OUT!!


BLOUP
BLOP
BLUP


VLOUP


FLAAAHHH

ドゴッ

DAMN...I'VE CUT DOWN SOMEONE ELSE!

FLOAT

I'D LIKE YOU TO PROTECT... MY SISTER AND MY BROTHER...

WAIT, LISTEN TO ME!

MM... HE'S DEAD.

I'VE COME TO WARN YOU! YOUR BROTHER HAS JUST BEEN KILLED BY ZATOICHI!!

HEY! ANYONE THERE?

KILLED?! BY ZATOICHI?!

WHAT?!

IT MUST BE THIS HOUSE...

I'M GONNA AVENGE MY BROTHER!!

WHAT?!
YOU'RE THE
SISTER OF...

Ah!!

GRH...

BODOMDOMDOM

I...I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

TAN

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS LACK OF REACTION EITHER...

WHY DIDN'T YOU DODGE MY THRUST? YOU DIDN'T EVEN DRAW YOUR SWORD TO PROTECT YOURSELF!

BUT...HE'S GONNA DIE IF I DON'T DO IT.

SISTER, WHY ARE YOU HEALING THAT MEAN MAN?!

HE KILLED OUR BROTHER!! DID YOU FORGET ALREADY?!

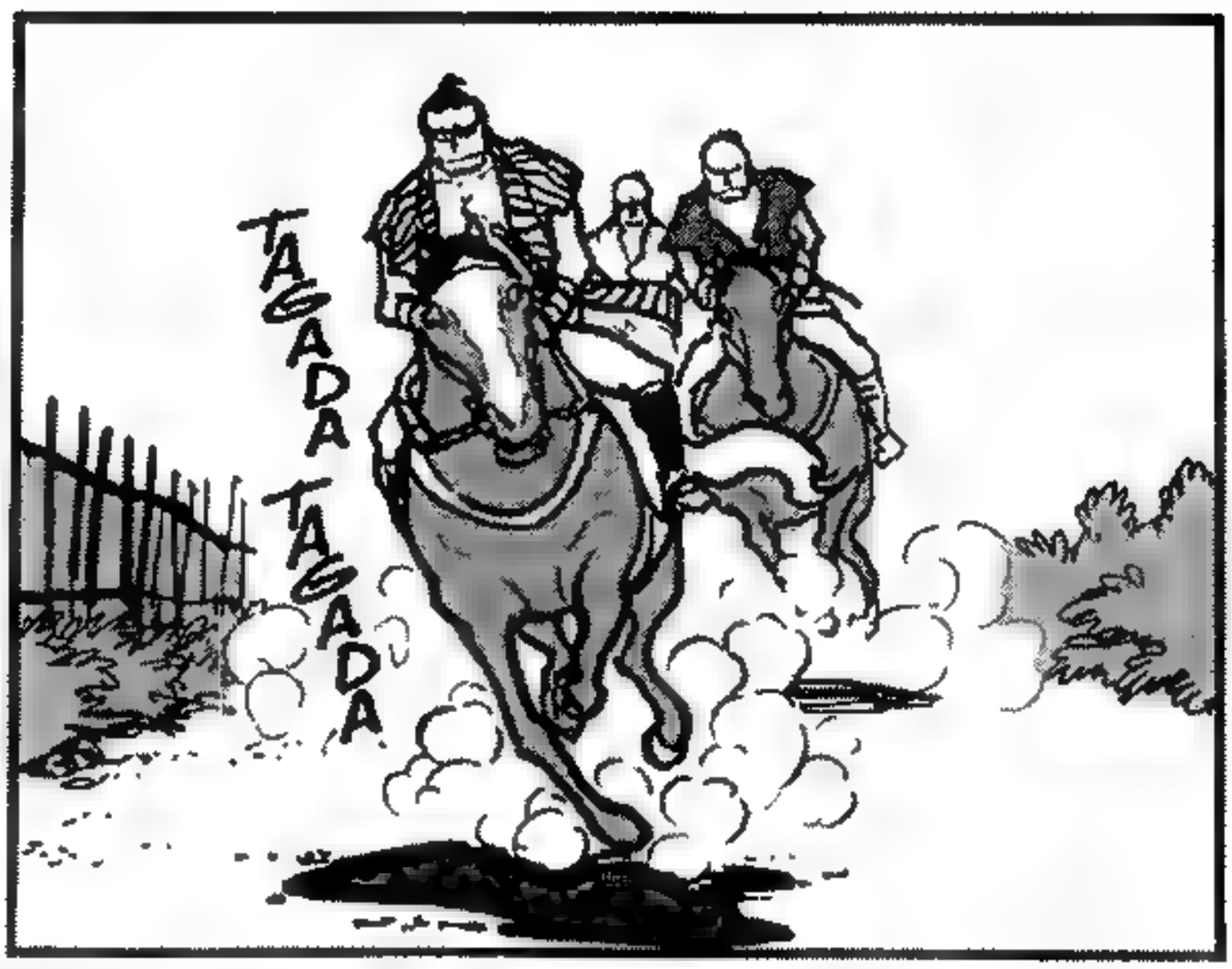
SO WHAT?! SO MUCH THE BETTER!!

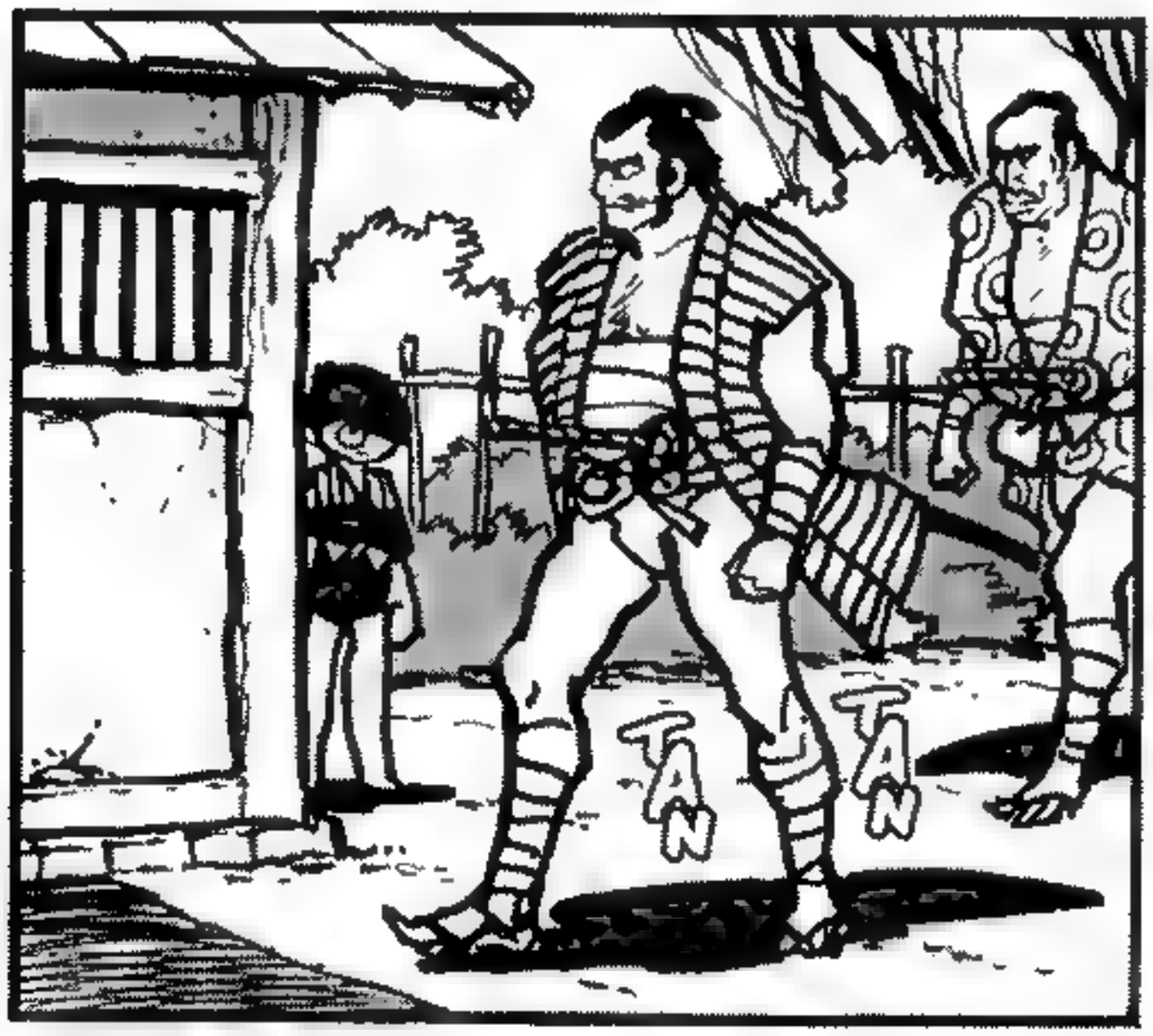
IF YOU DON'T KILL HIM, THEN I WILL!

*PFF!! I DON'T WANNA TALK TO YOU ANYMORE!!*

BUT...

Ah!!


TAGADA TAGADA


TAN
TAN

HEY!
IS OKICHI
HERE?

OKICHI!
I HEARD THAT
YOUR BROTHER
DIED!
WHAT?!

Hehe! YOU KNOW THAT ALREADY, DON'T YOU?

WHY DID YOU COME HERE? WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US?

I PROMISED HIM THAT I WOULD CANCEL THAT DEBT IF HE COULD PUT AN END TO ZATOICHI'S LIFE. UNFORTUNATELY, HE'S THE ONE WHO GOT KILLED...

A WHILE AGO, I LENT 30 RYO* TO YOUR BROTHER.

* 15000 EURO

WHAT?! YOU DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO DO THIS!

FROM NOW ON, THIS HOUSE AND THIS LAND ARE MINE!

AND I'LL TAKE YOU TOO, *hehehe*... YOU'RE GONNA BE MY WIFE!

LET GO OF ME!!

WHAT?! NO WAY!!

GET LOST, BRAT!

*STOP!* LEAVE MY SISTER ALONE!!

IT'S WRONG TO TREAT A KID SO BADLY.

OW!!

WHAT?!

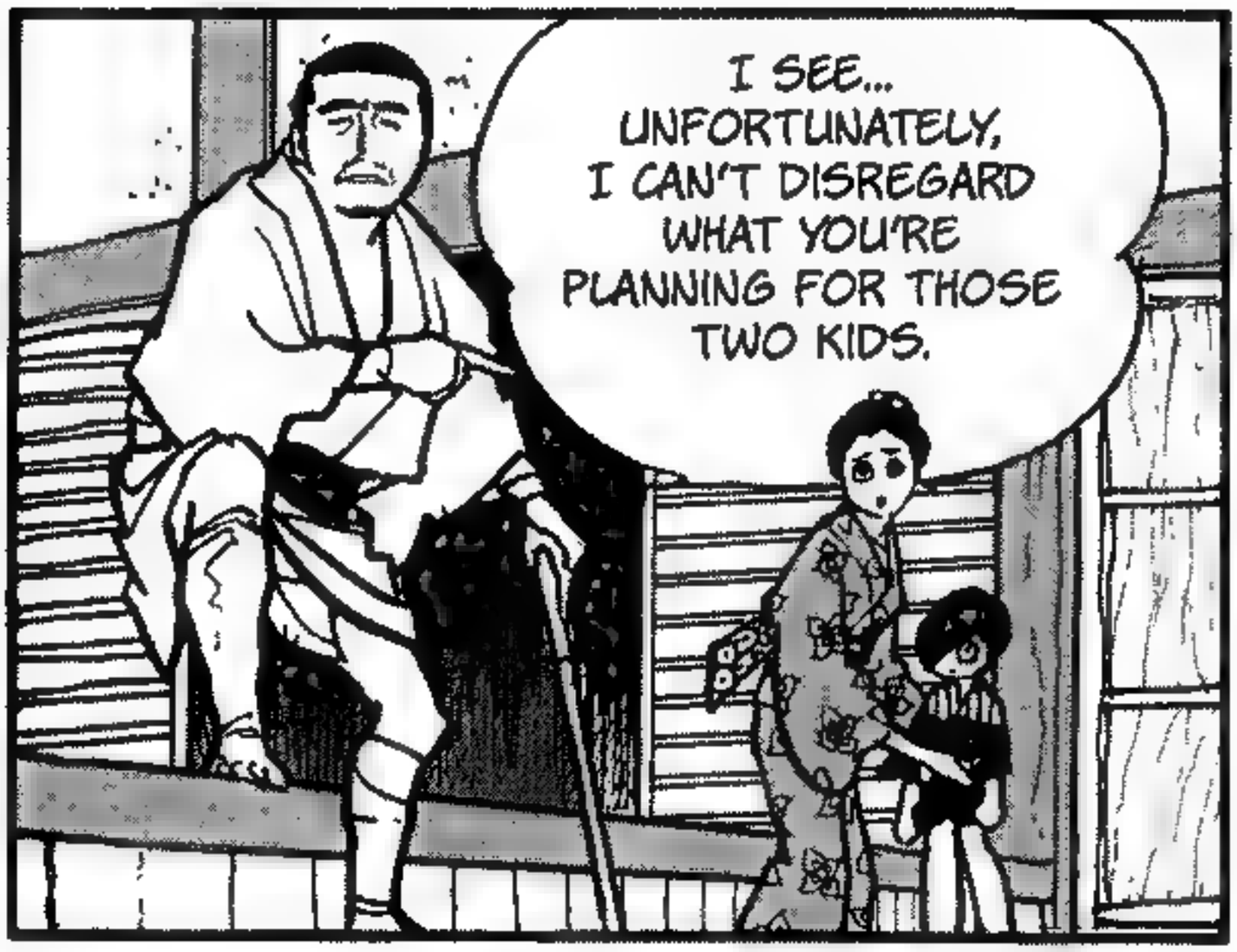
BE CAREFUL, BOSS! THAT'S ZATOICHI!

WHO ARE YOU, BLIND MAN?

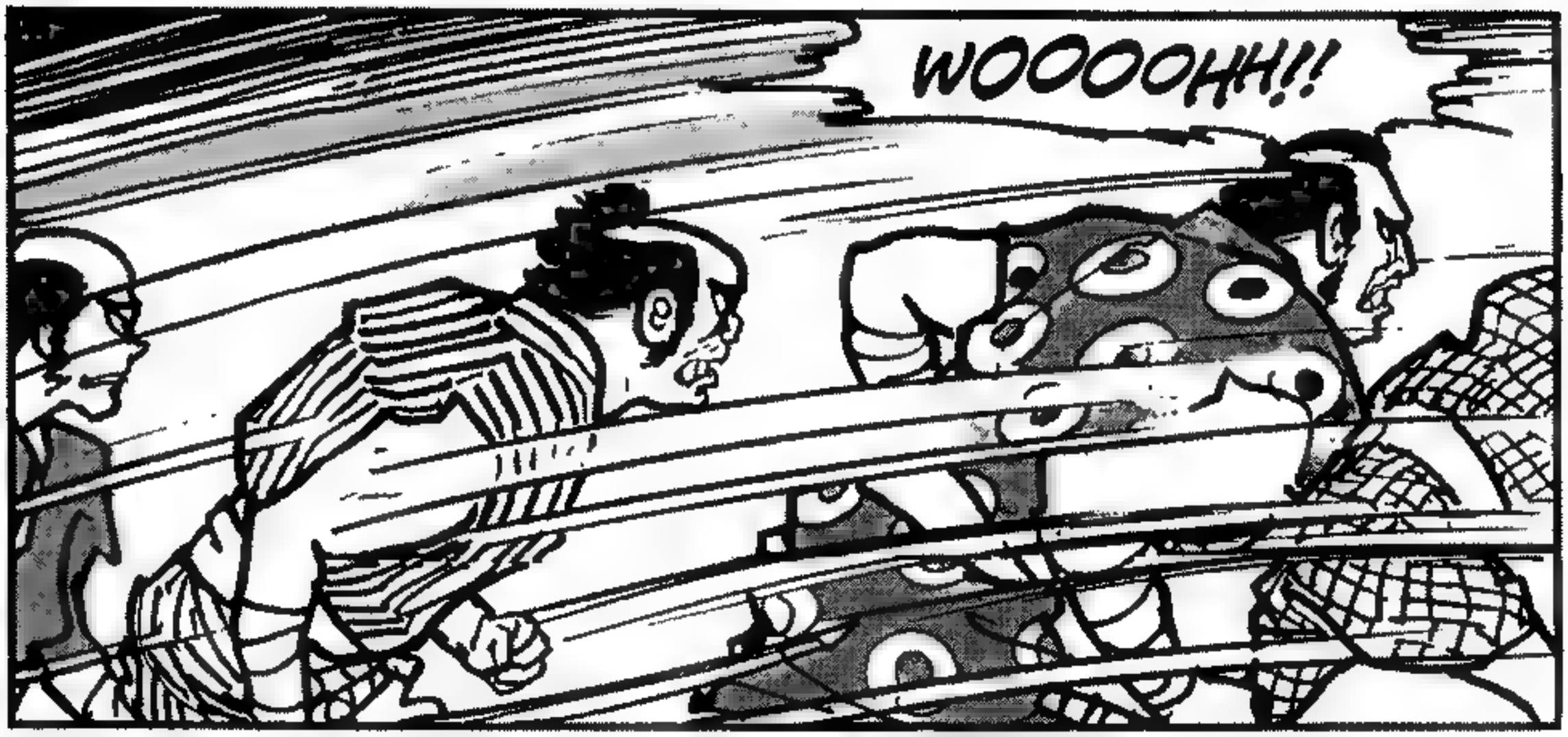
YOU'LL REGRET IT IF YOU STEP INTO OUR BUSINESS!

SO IT'S YOU...

WHAT?!


I SEE...
UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T DISREGARD WHAT YOU'RE PLANNING FOR THOSE TWO KIDS.

TAKE CARE OF HIM!!


WOOOOHH!!

BKLOM!!

BOOM

DZAF DZAF

I SEE, YOU'RE AN IAIDO* MASTER... JUST LIKE WHAT I'VE HEARD...

HE'S FAST!!

Wah!

ANYWAY, MAKE SURE YOU'RE GONE WHEN I'M BACK IN THREE DAYS, GOT IT?!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY, OKICHI! I'LL LEAVE YOU ALONE FOR NOW!

* IAIDO IS A JAPANESE MARTIAL ART ASSOCIATED WITH THE SMOOTH, CONTROLLED MOVEMENTS OF DRAWING THE SWORD FROM ITS SCABBARD, STRIKING OR CUTTING AN OPPONENT, REMOVING BLOOD FROM THE BLADE, AND THEN REPLACING THE SWORD IN THE SCABBARD.



WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO?

...

I HOPE YOU'RE NOT HURT ...

Hm?

THAT MAN... WHO IS HE?

HIS NAME'S TOHACHI. HE'S THE BIGGEST VILLAIN OF THIS VILLAGE.

UNFORTUNATELY, MY BROTHER LOVED GAMBLING...ONE DAY, HE BORROWED MONEY FROM TOHACHI...

PEOPLE ARE AFRAID OF HIM! THEY LET HIM DO WHATEVER HE WANTS! MY BROTHER WAS THE ONLY ONE STANDING AGAINST HIM!

YES...

I UNDERSTAND... THAT CROOK USED THAT DEBT TO MANIPULATE YOUR BROTHER.

IT'S MORE THAN LIKELY...

I'M SURE THAT TOHACHI ASKED MY BROTHER TO ATTACK YOU KNOWING THAT HE WOULD BE KILLED.

MISTER, YOU HAVE TO LEAVE THIS PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

I'D LIKE YOU TO PROTECT... MY SISTER AND MY BROTHER...

TOHACHI'S GONNA COME BACK, THAT'S FOR SURE! AND... I DON'T WANT YOU TO GET INTO TROUBLE BECAUSE OF ME.

WHY'S THAT?!

...I'D LIKE TO SEE THAT POOR DEVIL TOHACHI AGAIN!

OKICHI-SAN... EVEN THOUGH I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHY...

BOSS TOHACHI! WHAT HAPPENED TO ZATOICHI, THE MAN I ASKED YOU TO KILL?

...

REALLY?

...THE MAN I SENT ON THAT MISSION HAS BEEN CUT DOWN BY ZATOICHI.

WELL, I'M SORRY, BUT...

EIGORO WOULD'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO KILL ZATOICHI!

*Hehehe!* YES, THEY HAVE!

MIAN MURON

I THINK THINGS HAVE TURNED OUT EXACTLY LIKE YOU PLANNED THEM TO, HAVEN'T THEY?

BOSS!

*Hahaha!* *Aah,* IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE!

*Heh!* BUT THEN, BOSS... IT MEANS THAT YOU'VE BEEN MAKING FUN OF ME FROM THE BEGINNING!

HELLO!

Waha haha!

Hahaha!

Dang! I DON'T REMEMBER ASKING FOR A MASSEUR!

IT'S ZATOICHI!!

HELLO, BOSS! I'VE JUST COME TO ASK YOU FOR A LITTLE FAVOR...

WHAT DEFUNCT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

AN OFFERING FOR A POOR DEFUNCT...

WHAT IS IT?

*WHAT?!* ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!

WELL... EIGORO-SAN, OF COURSE!

*Hehe...*

...

*Mm*...I DON'T THINK I CAN LEAVE THIS PLACE BEFORE YOU GIVE 20 RYO*.

* 10000 EURO

WHAT'S YOUR GAME?

Heh

WELL... WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY A LITTLE GAME WITH ME?

BLIND MAN! GET OUT OF HERE, I WON'T GIVE YOU ANY MONEY!

BUT... YOU'RE BLIND, AREN'T YOU?

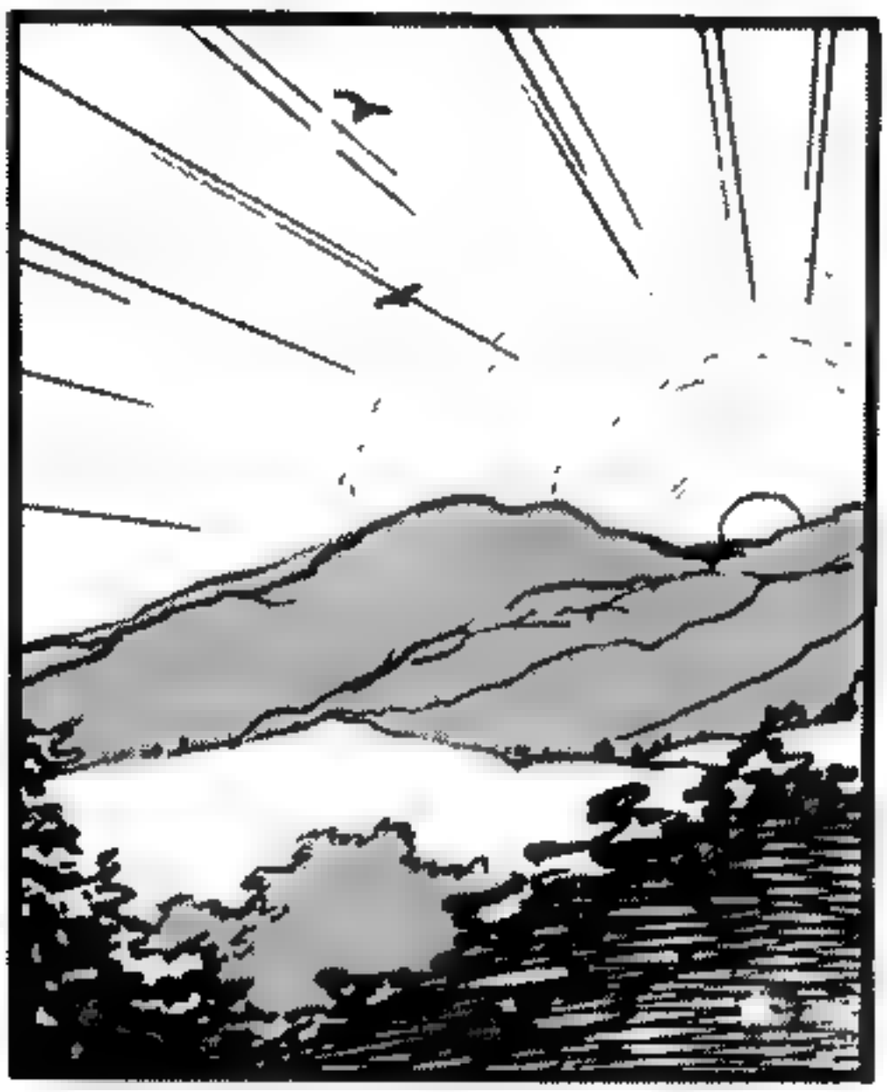
...YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE ME THE 20 RYO!

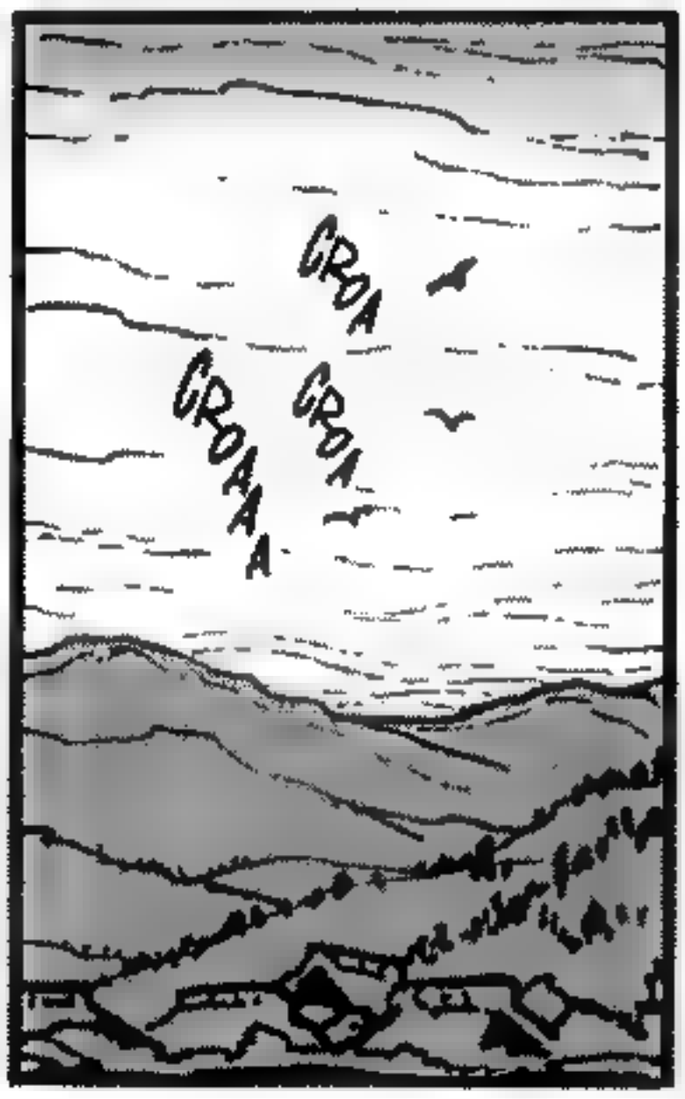
I'M GONNA STAY HERE ON THIS SEAT UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING WITHOUT SLEEPING EVEN A SINGLE SECOND! IF I SUCCEED...

*Mm*...YOU'RE RIGHT. IN THAT CASE, YOU JUST HAVE TO PUT A MAN NEXT TO ME TO VERIFY...

I WON'T BE ABLE TO VERIFY IF YOU SLEEP OR NOT!

...THAT GAME SOUNDS LIKE FUN!
Hahaha... AGREED!
...YOU CAN CUT MY HEAD OFF IF I FALL ASLEEP!




CROA
CROA
CROAAA

HERE'S THE MONEY FOR THE BET!

I HEARD THAT YOU DIDN'T SLEEP A WINK ALL NIGHT.

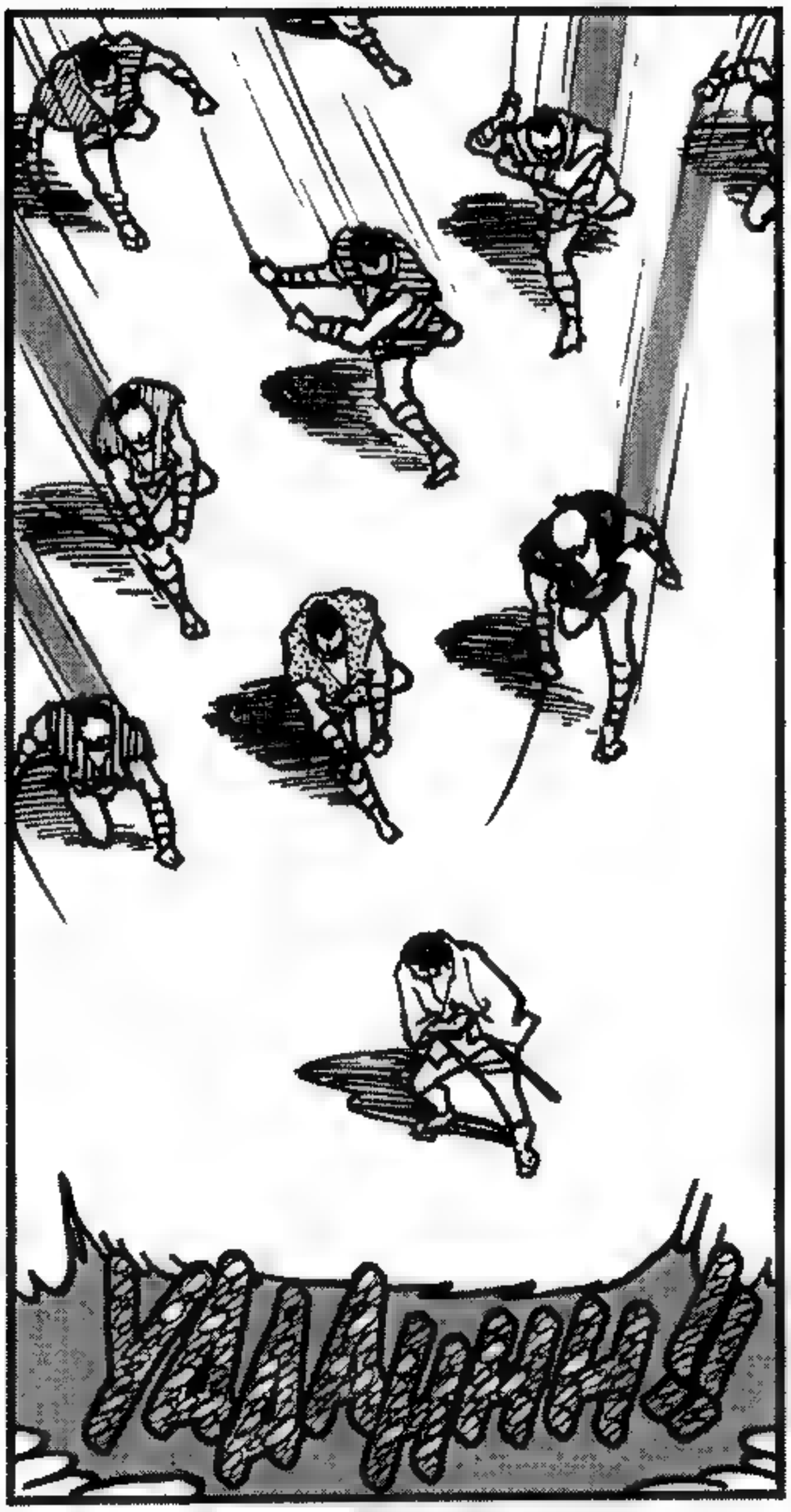
*Hah hah!* WELL DONE, BLIND MAN!

THAT'S REALLY KIND OF YOU!

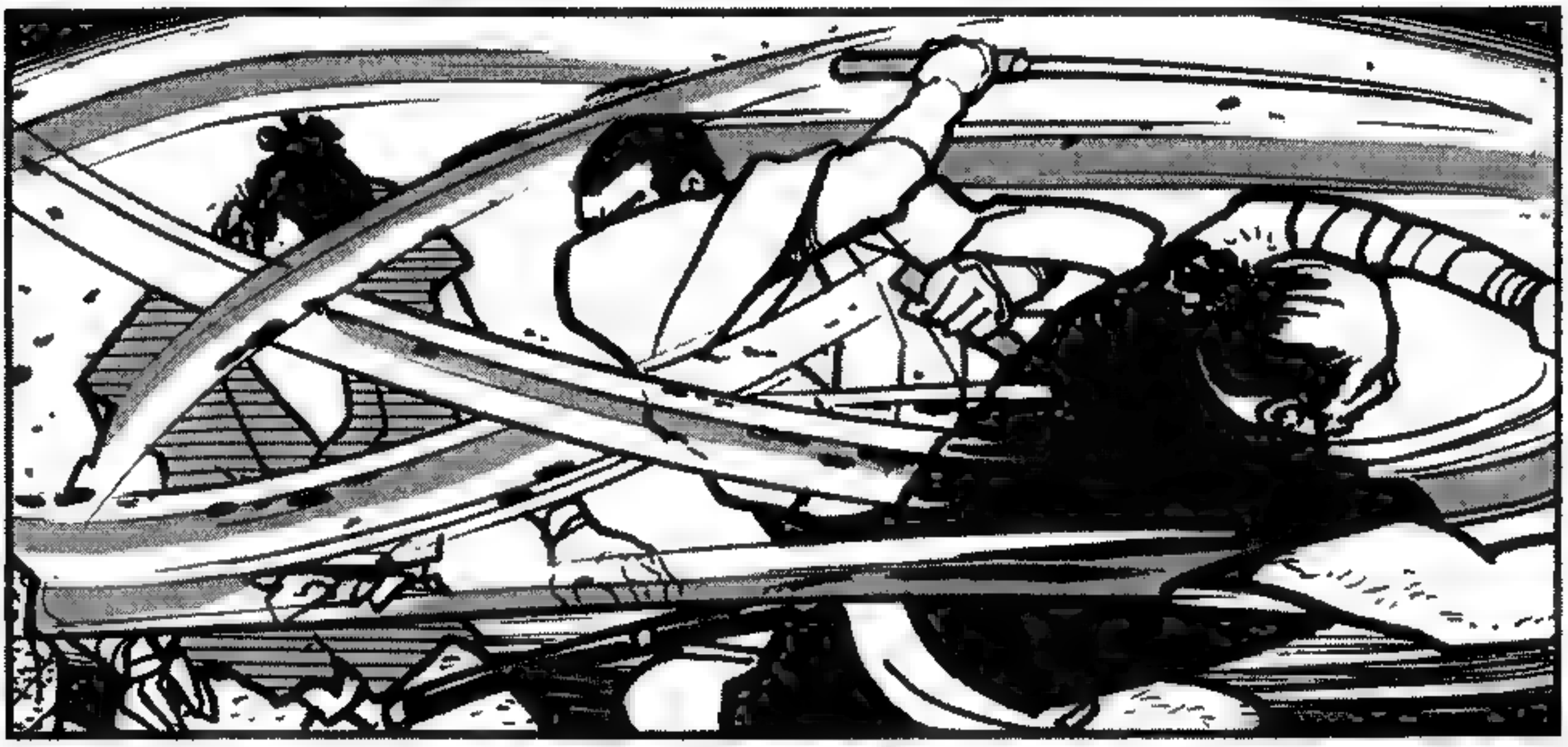
IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR THEM TO COME.

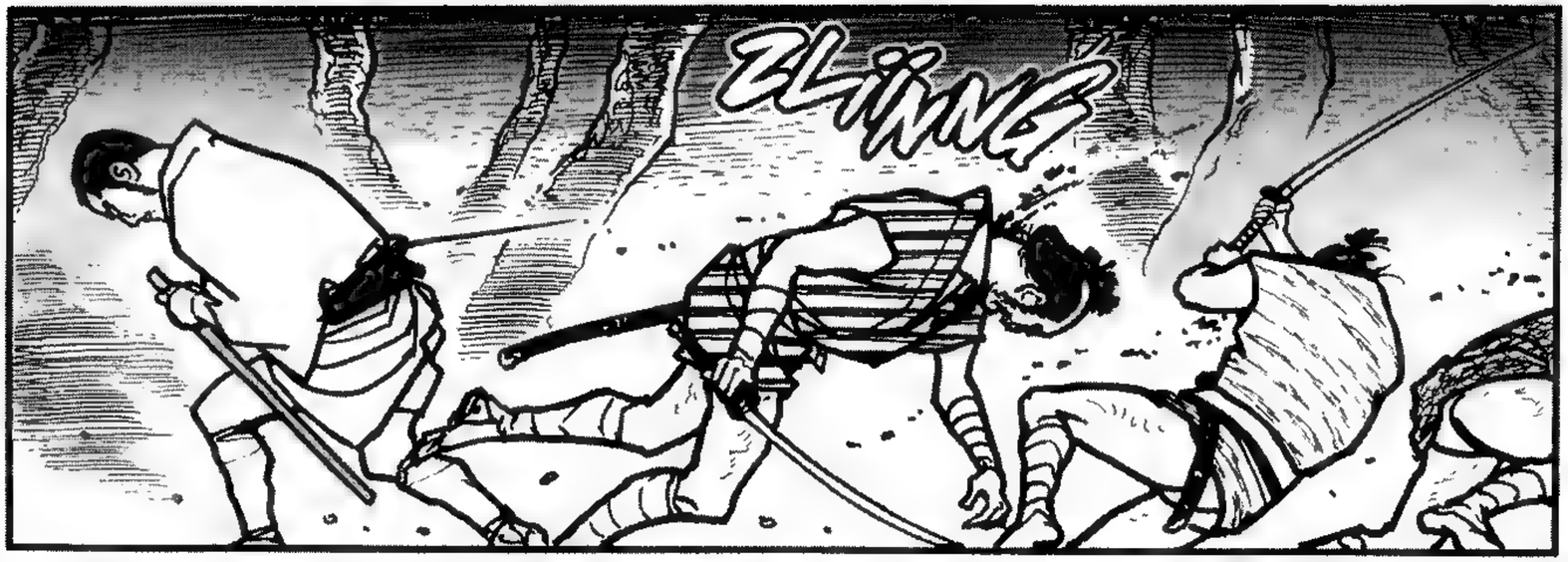
HELLO! ONE PERSON... TWO PERSONS...

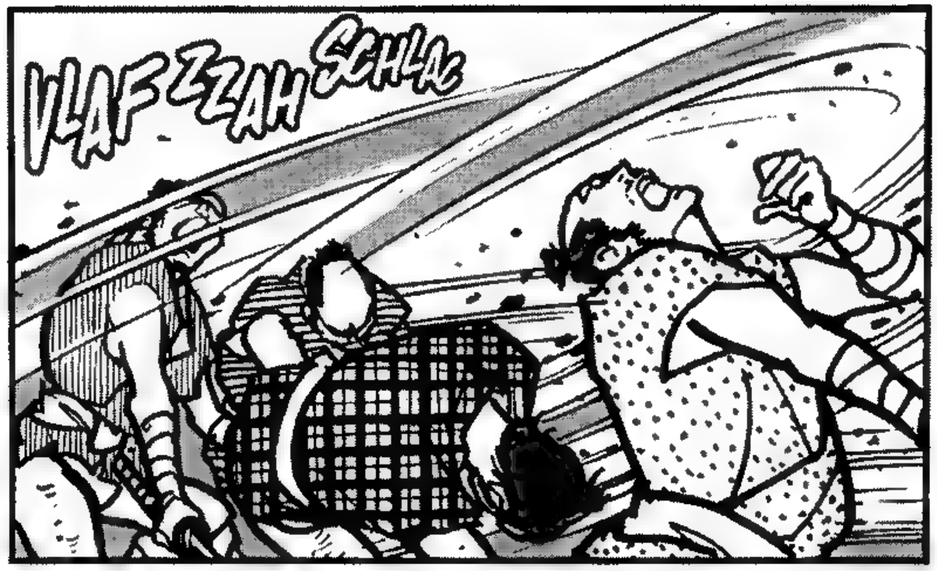
*Ffhh*...IT'S NOT EASY TO STAY AWAKE ALL NIGHT...


AHAHAHAHA!

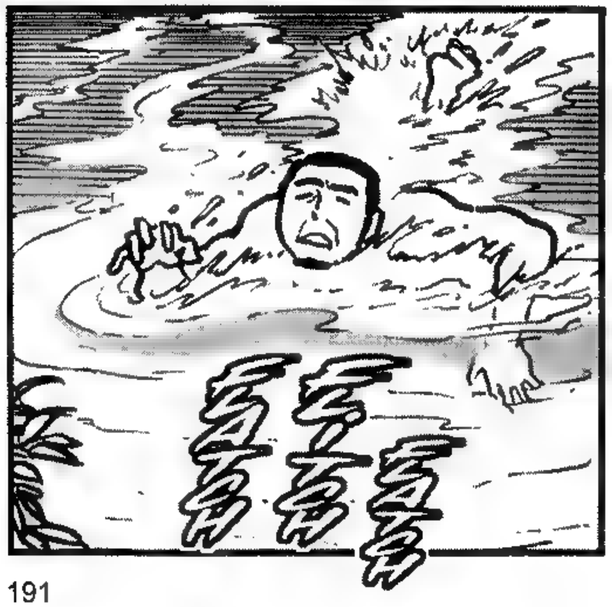
MM... ABOUT TEN PEOPLE...

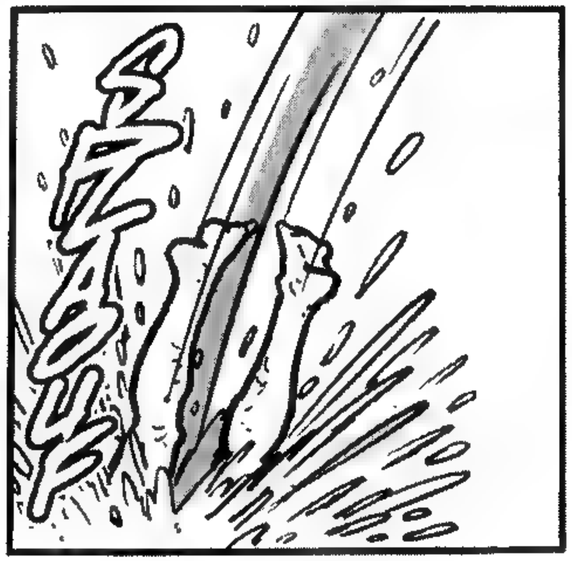



CLANG


VLAFZZAH
SCHLAG

REALLY ?!
IT'S AN OFFERING FOR YOUR BROTHER... FROM TOHACHI...





IT'S OVER...

Huh?!

THIS... IS FOR YOU.

ICHI-SAN?!
WHERE WERE YOU YESTERDAY?

DON'T FORGET THAT HE KILLED OUR ELDER!

SISTER! WHY ARE YOU SO FRIENDLY WITH HIM?!

*Haa!* IT FEELS GOOD TO SWIM IN THE SUMMER.

I CAN ONLY RELY ON MYSELF FROM NOW ON!

FORGET IT!

WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO? TELL ME!

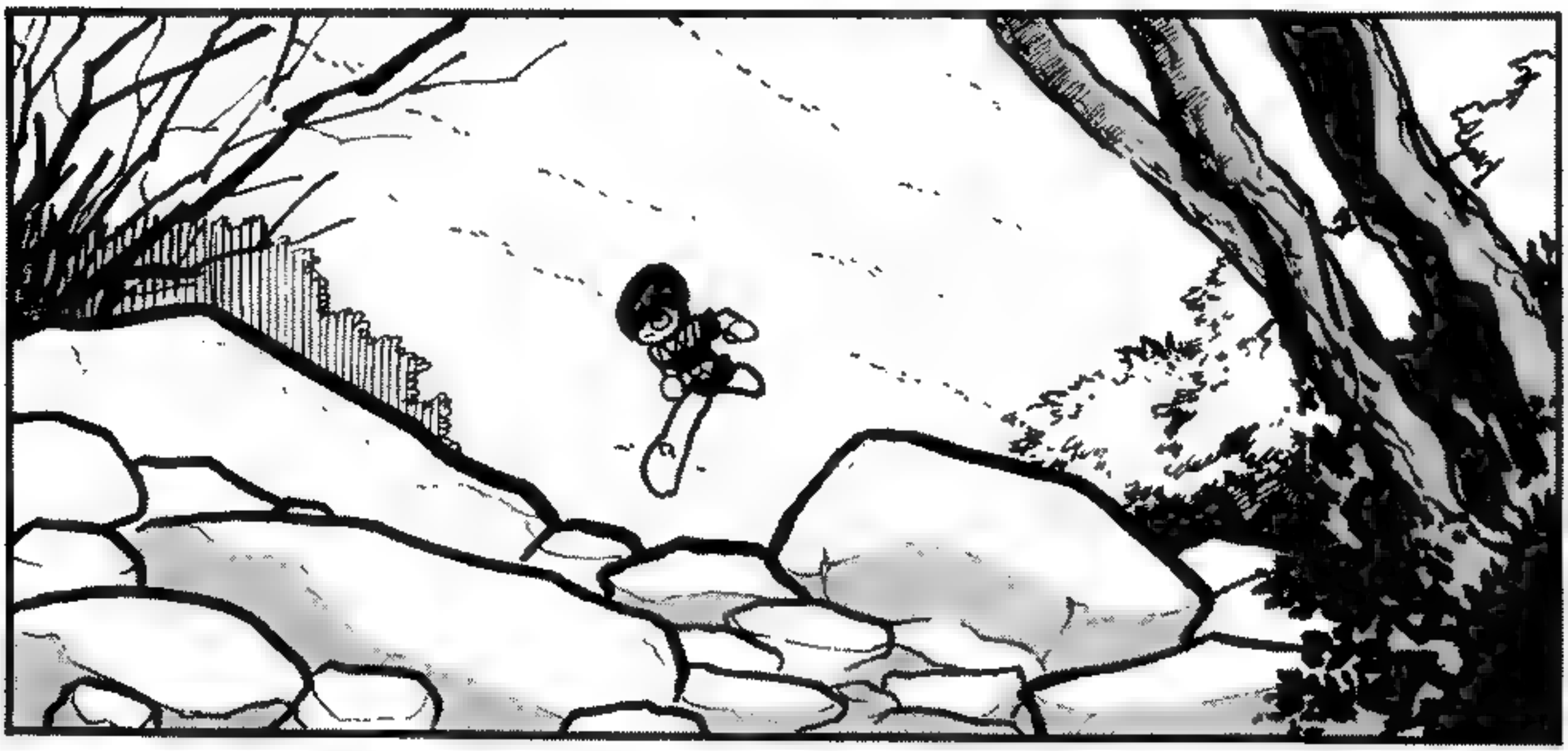
BUT GOICHI...

GOICHI!! COME BACK!!

GOICHI, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

I'LL TAKE CARE OF ZATOICHI MYSELF!

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO DO?
GOICHI... YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO REASON.



I'LL USE THAT SNAKE POISON!

I'M GONNA AVENGE MY BROTHER!

DAMN ZATOICHI!

AH, THANK YOU.

ICHI-SAN, MEAL'S READY.

I THINK HE'S PLAYING OUTSIDE.

WHERE IS YOUR BROTHER, GOICHI?

TIME TO EAT!

THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL.

Nn!

IN FACT, I WONDER WHERE HE IS...

EEYAAAHH!!

WHAT'S GOING ON, ICHI-SAN?! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

EUUFK!

NNH!

AAAHH!

RIGHT NOW!

ICHI-SAN!

WA... WATER! GIVE ME... WATER!

HE DESERVED IT ANY-WAY!

GOICHI! ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?!

GOICHI!
DON'T LEAVE!

GUARK

HUHHH

...

ICHI-SAN
...

ARE YOU
FEELING BETTER
NOW?

BOSS! THAT DAMNED BLIND MAN HAS SPENT THE LAST TEN DAYS IN OKICHI'S HOUSE! WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO?

AH?

BOSS! I THINK I HAVE AN IDEA!

*Grrrr*...BELIEVE ME, HE'S GONNA PAY! BUT I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET RID OF HIM.

...PERFECT! IT SHOULD WORK JUST FINE!

OFF

I'M STARTING TO GET WORRIED....

IT'S GETTING LATE. AND YOUR BROTHER ISN'T BACK YET.

ZATOICHI, IF YOU WANT THE KID BACK ALIVE, COME TO MY HOUSE ALONE.

TOHACHI

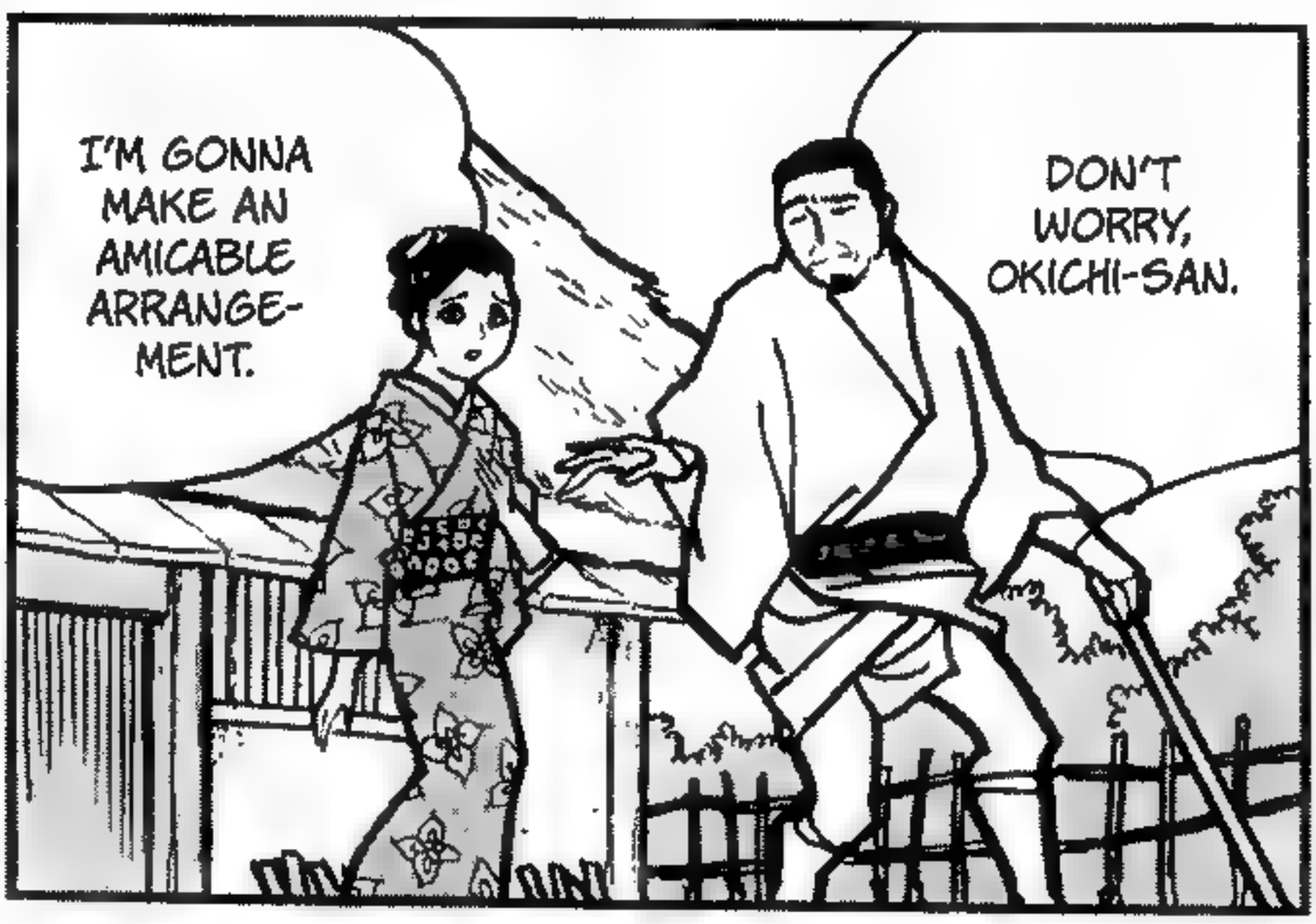
?

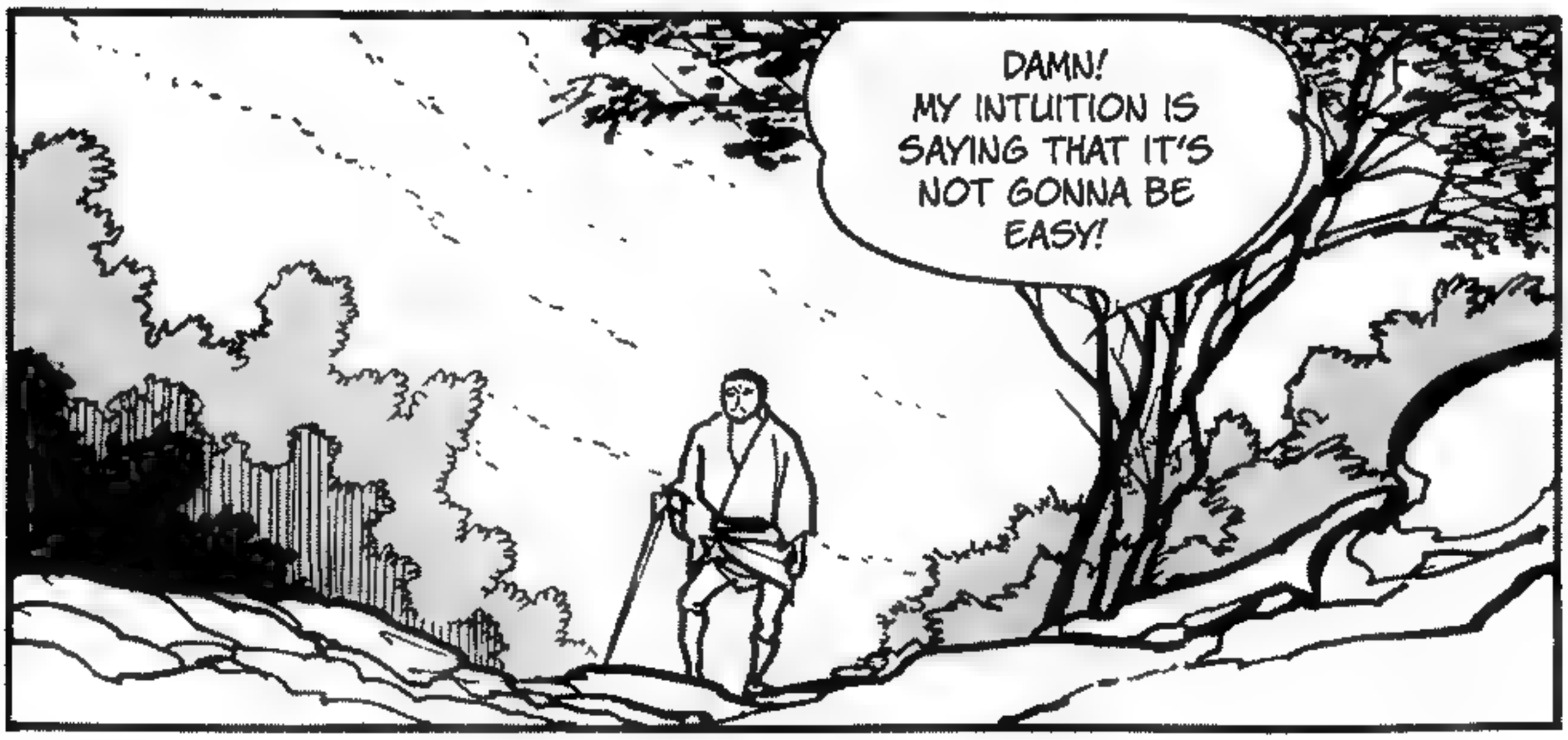
YOUR BROTHER HAS BEEN ABDUCTED BY TOHACHI... I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!

I KNOW ...

WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO, ICHI-SAN?! TOHACHI IS TRYING TO SET YOU UP WITH THIS LETTER!

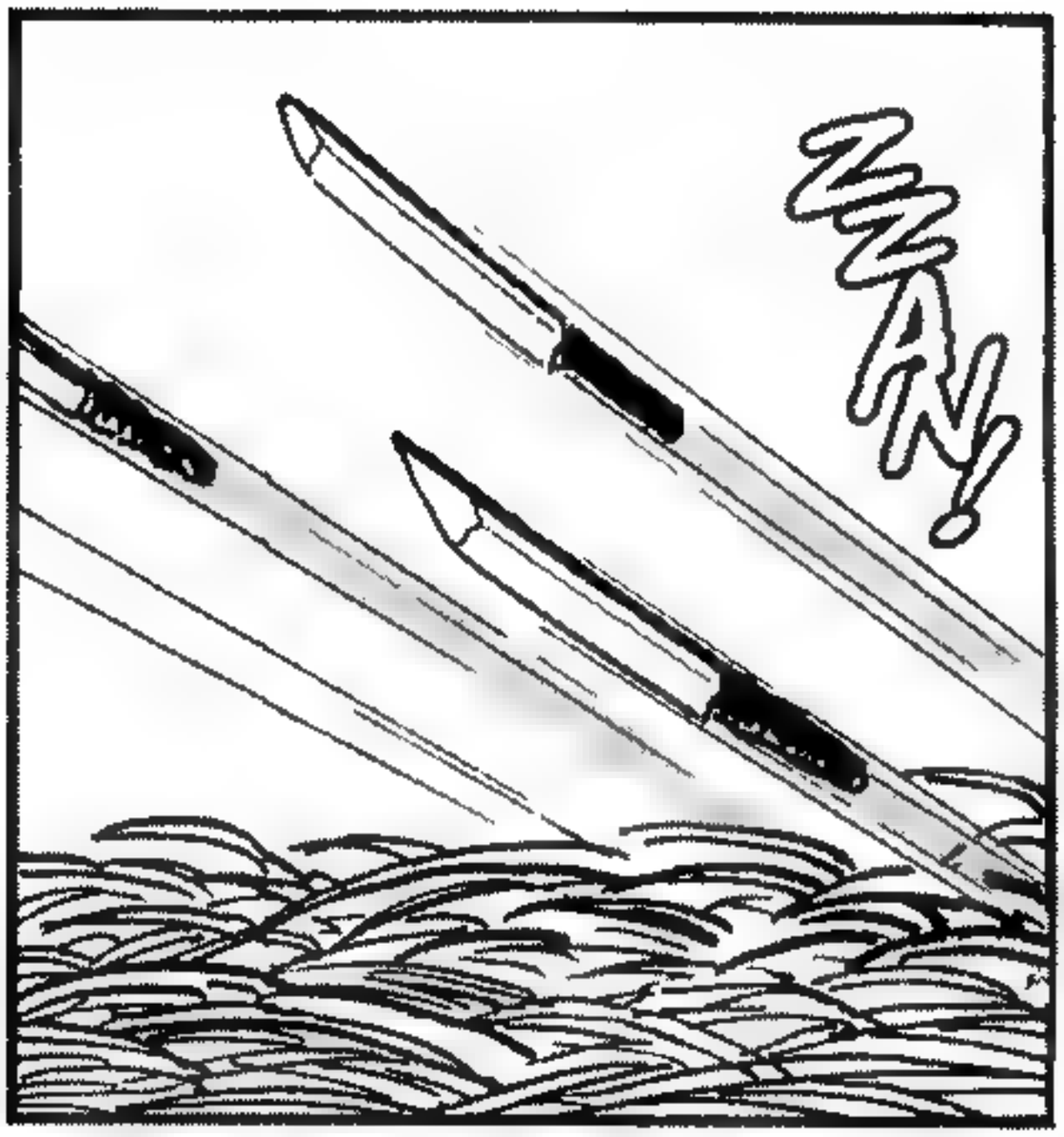
ICHI-SAN!
I'M GOING...


I'M GONNA MAKE AN AMICABLE ARRANGE-MENT.
DON'T WORRY, OKICHI-SAN.

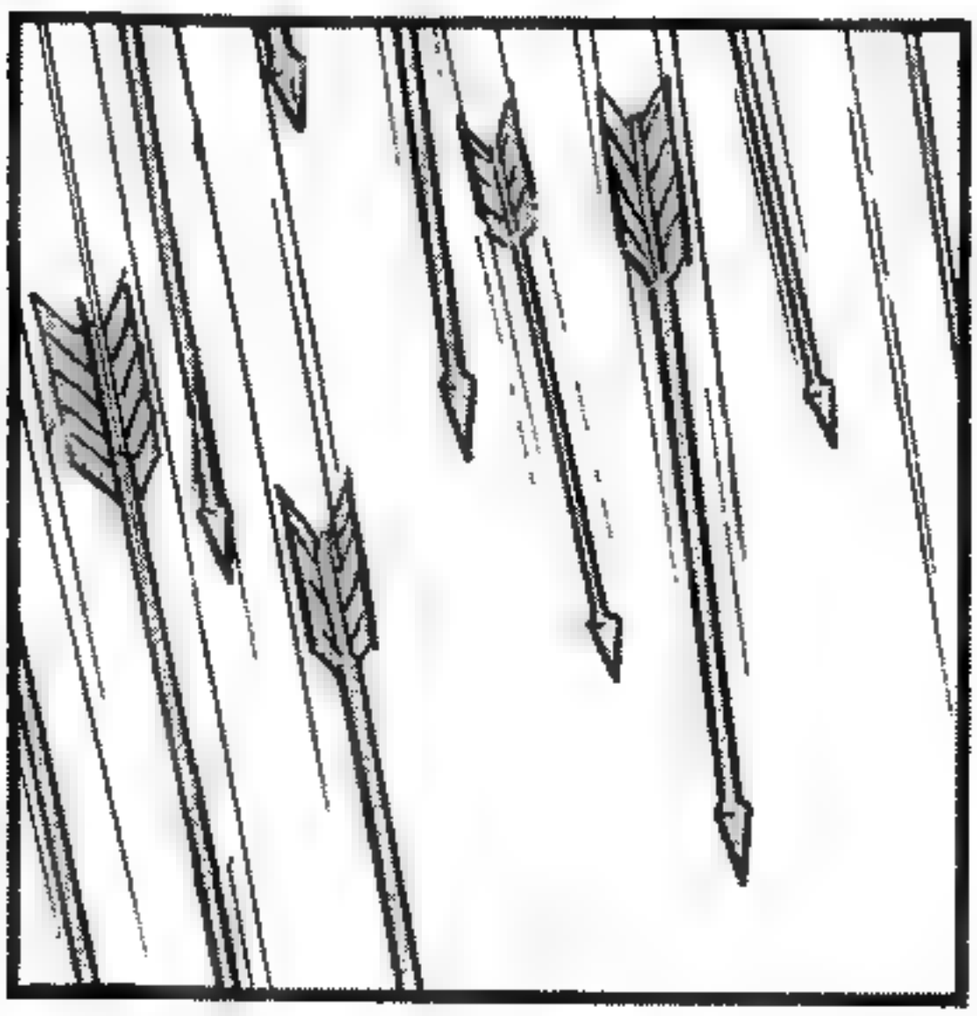

DAMN! MY INTUITION IS SAYING THAT IT'S NOT GONNA BE EASY!

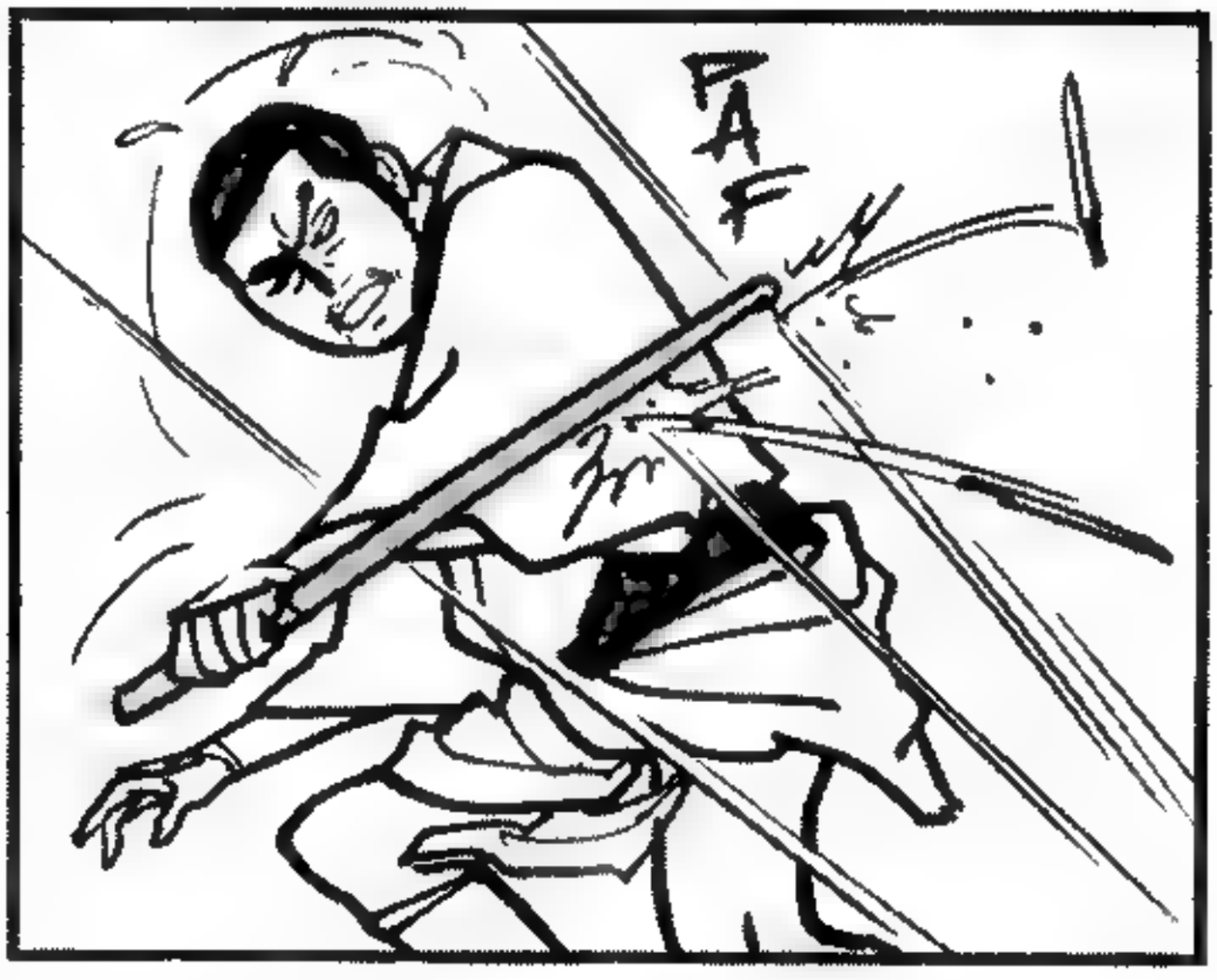
AAHH!!

SHAFF


ZWAAN!

A TRAP... IT LOOKS LIKE I'M EXPECTED!
HMM...




PAF

EEHH!!

BRRLOOM

BOOM
RLOOM
BOOM
BOOM

BUT... IT MUST'VE BEEN A LOT OF WORK TO PREPARE THEM!

I WASN'T SURPRISED BY THOSE TRAPS SINCE THEY WERE SPYING ON ME FROM THE BEGINNING...

YES...EVEN THOUGH IT WAS KINDA HARD...

OOH... YOU GOT HERE ANYWAY, ZATOICHI!

*Hehehe!* TODAY, I'LL FINALLY HAVE THE PLEASURE OF SEEING YOUR DEATH!

IF YOU WANNA SAVE THAT KID...

WHAT?

*Ah,* I FORGOT... YOU CAN'T SEE ANYTHING.

LOOK!

...Nn...

...YOU'LL GIVE ME YOUR SWORDSTICK NICE AND EASY!

IF YOU DON'T GIVE ME YOUR SWORDSTICK RIGHT NOW ...

SHUT UP!

DARING TO TAKE A KID AS HOSTAGE... THAT'S NOT A REALLY NOBLE WAY TO DO THINGS, EVEN FOR A YAKUZA!

...Hnn...

...I'M GONNA SLIT THE KID'S THROAT WITHOUT REMORSE!!

SLASH

ALL RIGHT! I PROMISE.

OKAY. I'M GONNA GIVE IT TO YOU IF YOU PROMISE TO LET HIM GO RIGHT NOW.

COME ON! TIE HIM UP!

NOW, GET OUTTA HERE, BRAT!

*Hehehe...*

Hehe...

IT WOULD BE A WASTE IF I KILLED YOU IN ONE SHOT, DON'T YOU THINK? BELIEVE ME, I'M GONNA PUT AN END TO YOUR LIFE VERY SLOWLY...

DESPICABLE WORM! HOW COULD YOU CUT MY MEN DOWN?!

SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE

SCRAPE SCRAPE

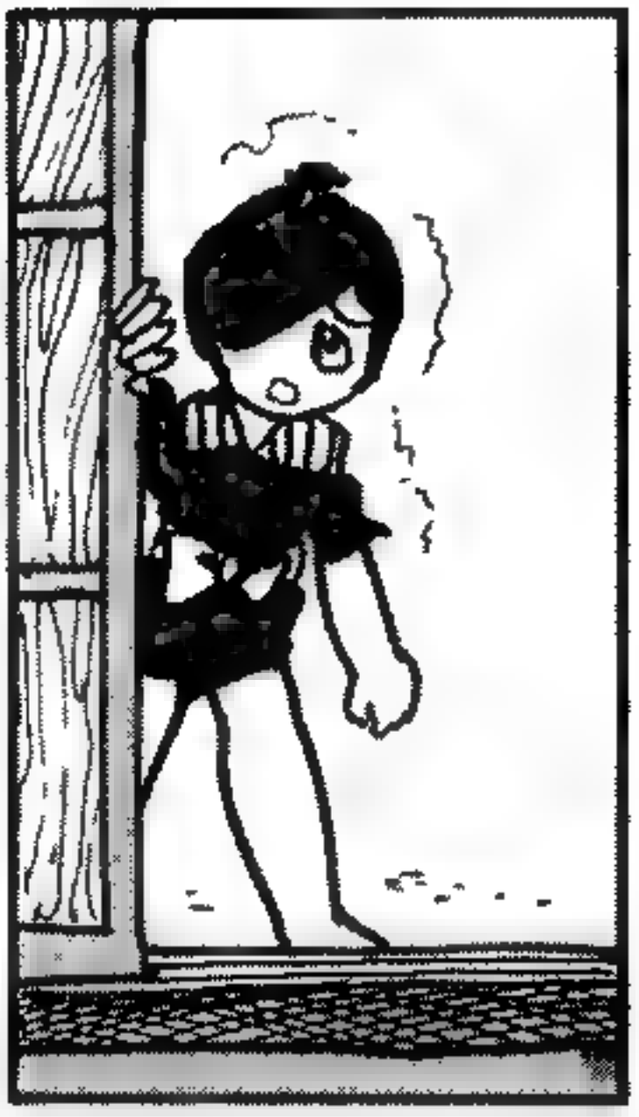
SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE

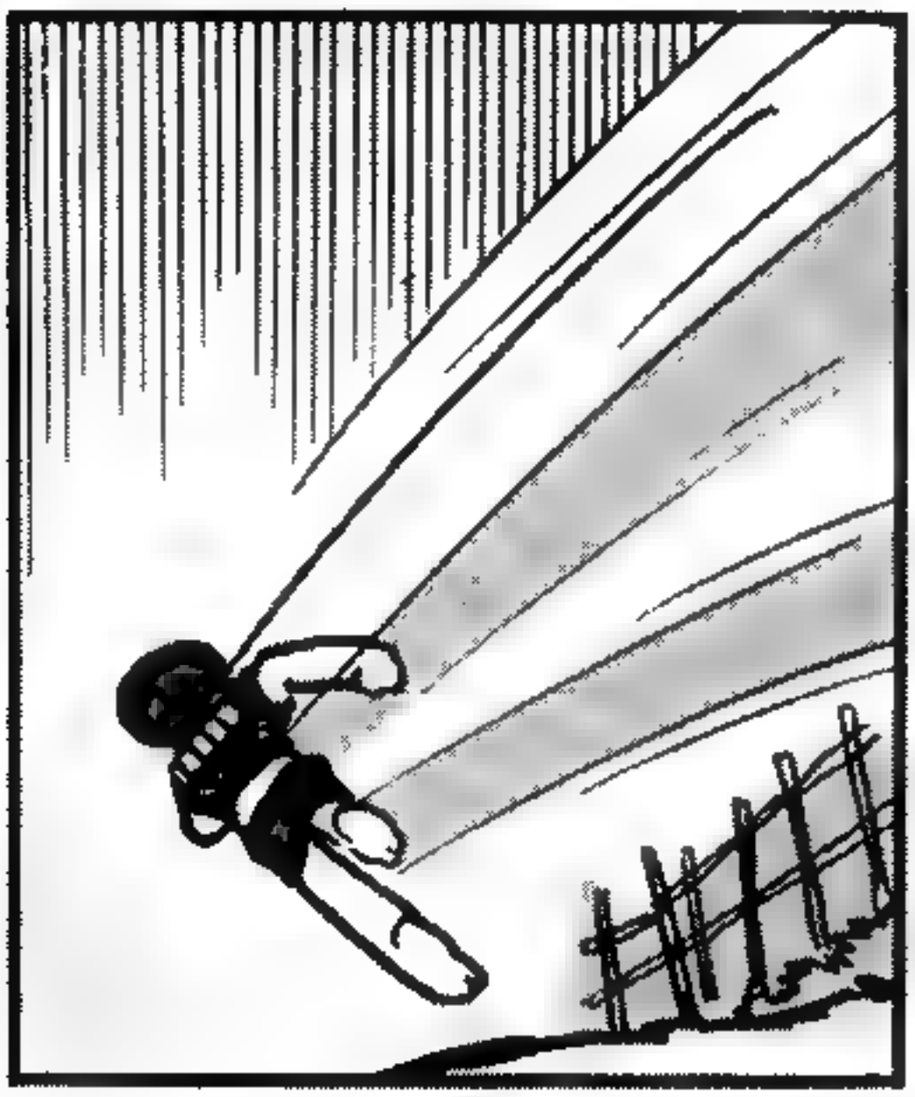
VROOMM

Nn...

GGGG
AAA
K

THAT'S AWFUL! HE'S ENDURING ALL THIS...





...BECAUSE OF ME!

DON'T WORRY! I'M GONNA PUT YOU OUT OF YOUR MISERY SOON.

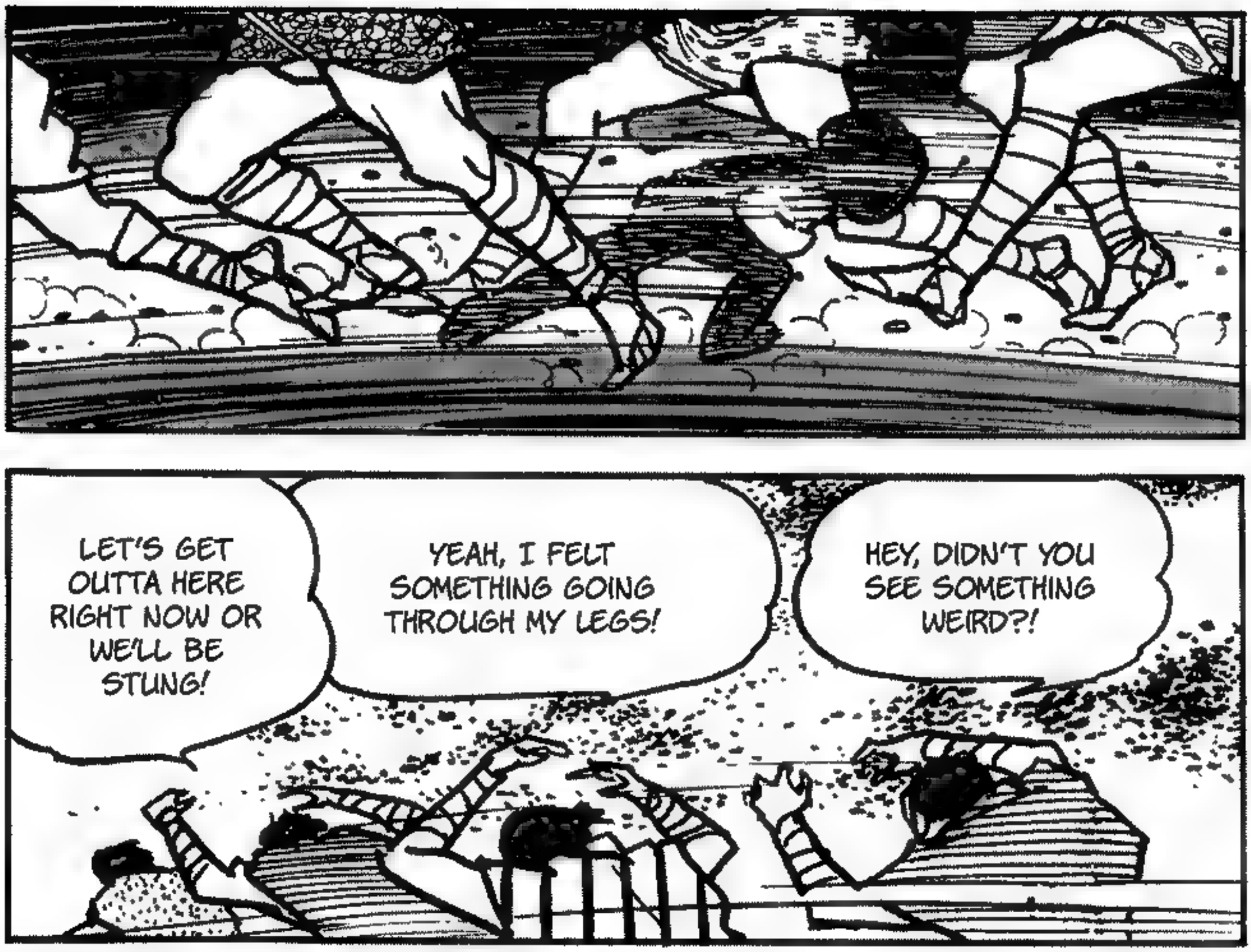
HEY, ICHI! DO YOU REGRET WHAT YOU'VE DONE?

THANKS, BOSS!

GUYS! YOU CAN JOIN ME AND HAVE A DRINK TO CELEBRATE OUR REVENGE!

HUH?!

WHAT'S IN THERE?
WHO DID THIS?!
WAAAH!!
BEES! THERE WAS A HIVE IN THE BAG!
HELP! LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!
YAAAAH


LET'S GET OUTTA HERE RIGHT NOW OR WE'LL BE STUNG!
YEAH, I FELT SOMETHING GOING THROUGH MY LEGS!
HEY, DIDN'T YOU SEE SOMETHING WEIRD?!
I'M HERE, MISTER!
OUTTA HERE!
AAH!!

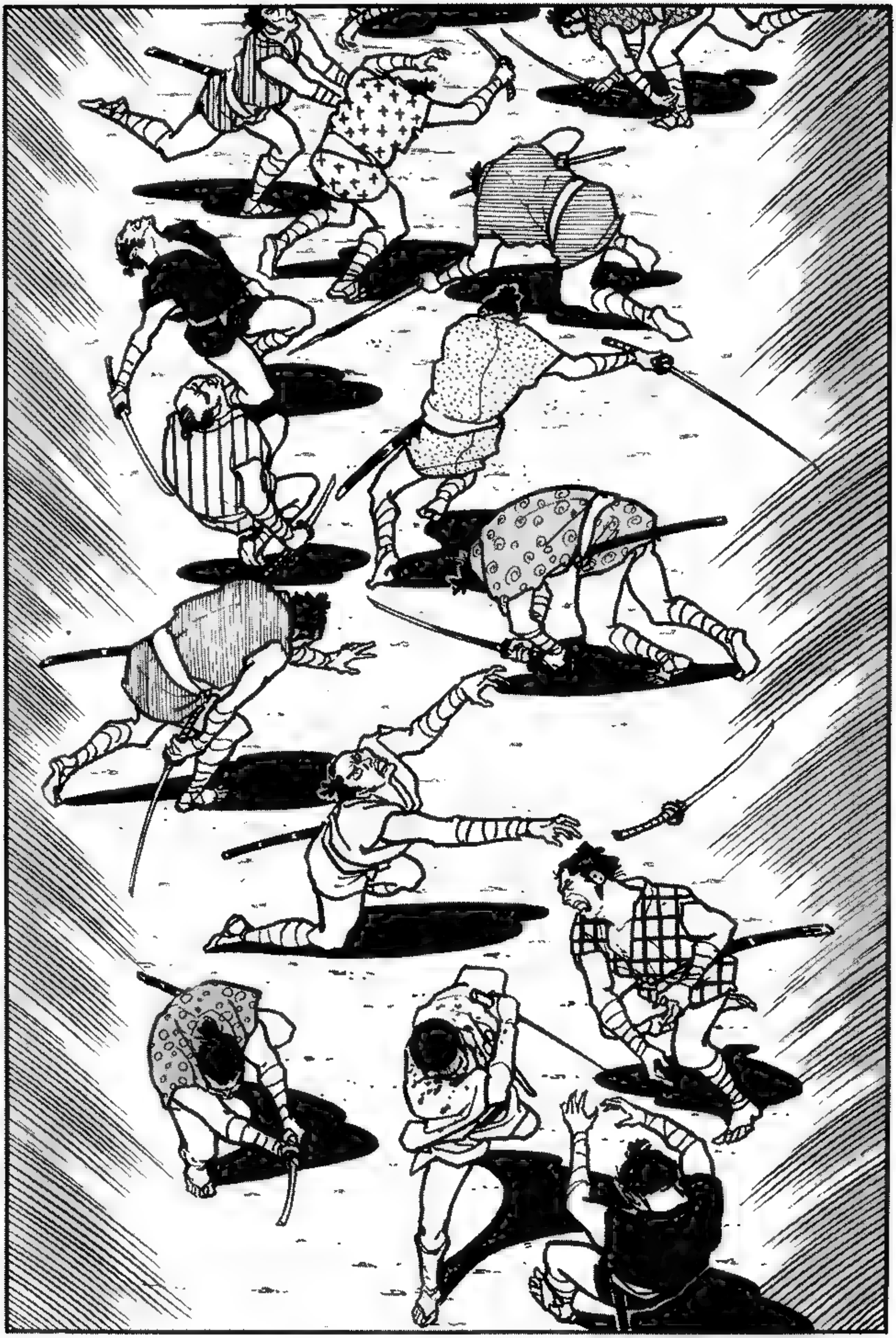
YAAAAAAAHH!!

COME ON! LET'S TAKE THE BACK DOOR!!

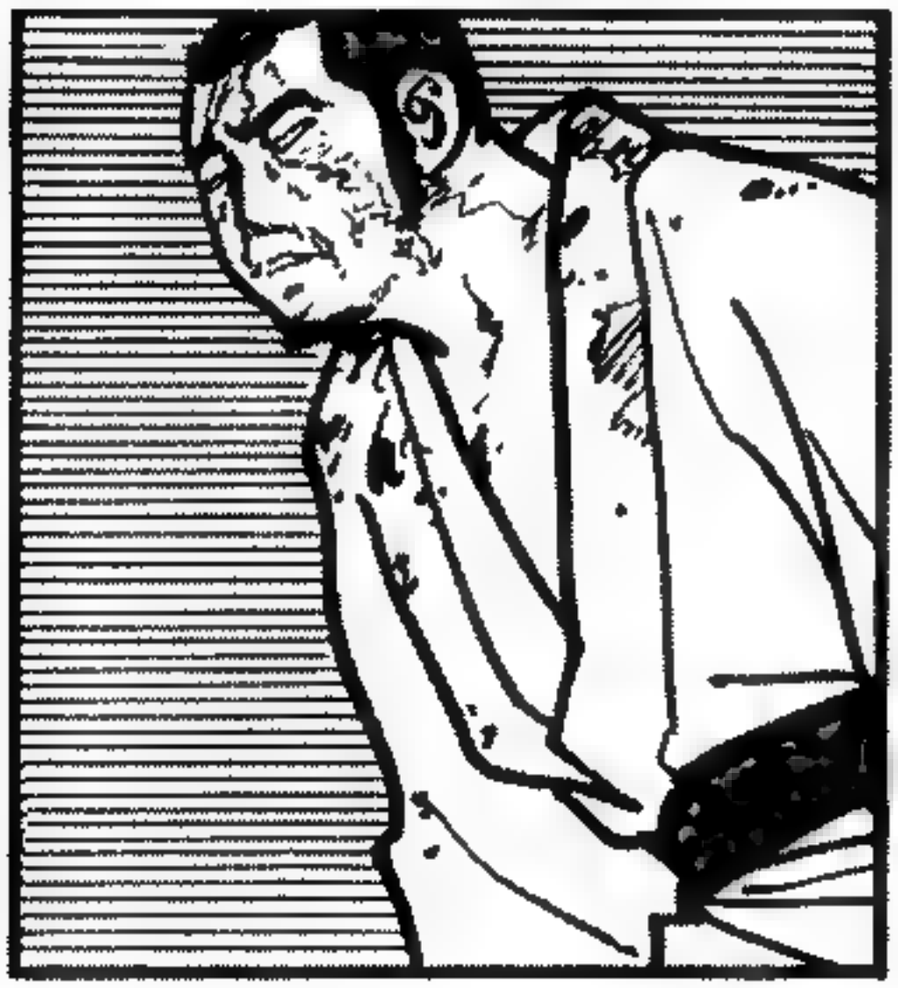
DON'T STAY CLOSE TO ME, KID!!

YOU WON'T GO ANY FARTHER!

DAMN BLIND MAN!! SURRENDER RIGHT NOW!!



ZZZAAK



BOMF

MISTER!

TON

IT WAS I WHO TRIED TO POISON YOU!

NOOOO! I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY!

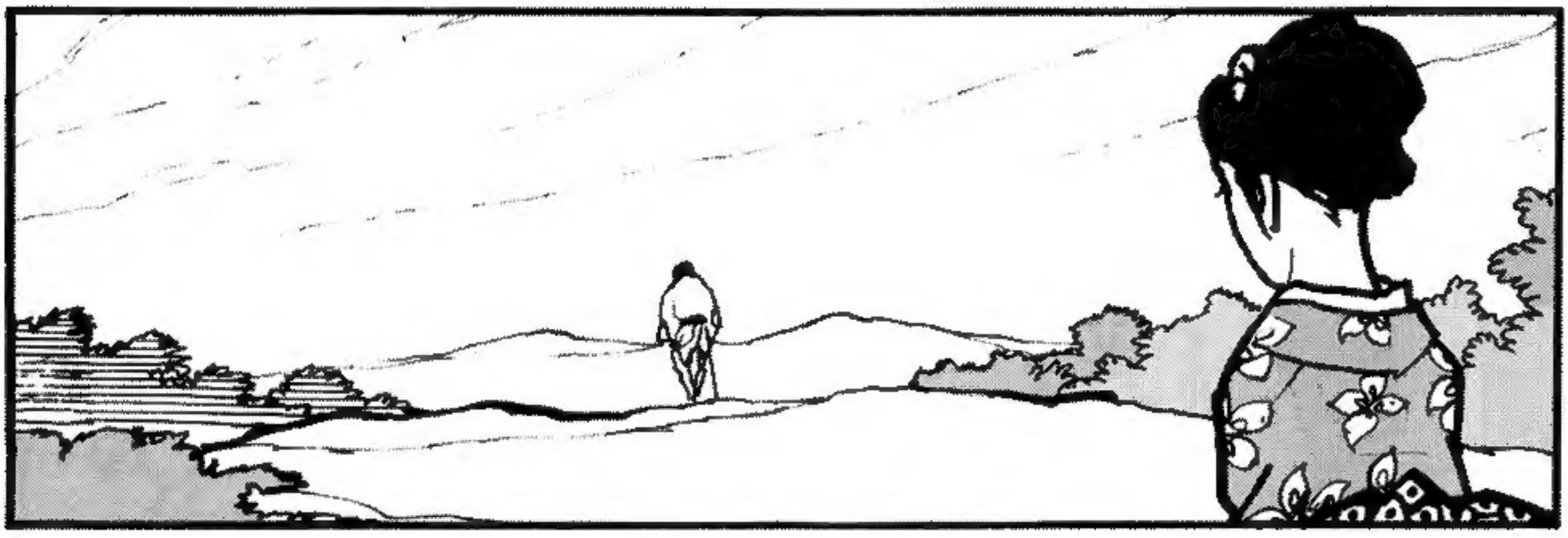
MISTER, ANSWER ME!!

MY BODY IS STAINED WITH BLOOD... I CAN'T STAY WITH YOU...

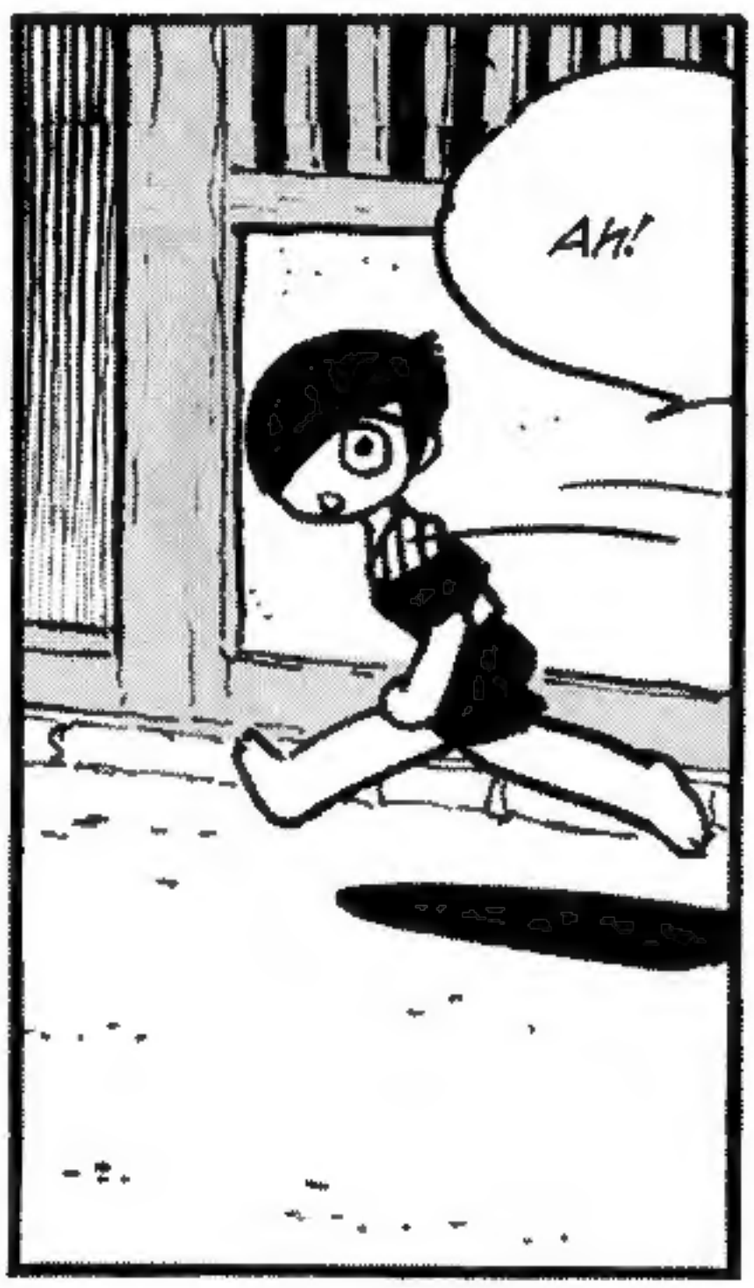
SO, YOU HAVE DECIDED TO RETURN TO YOUR TRIP NOW?

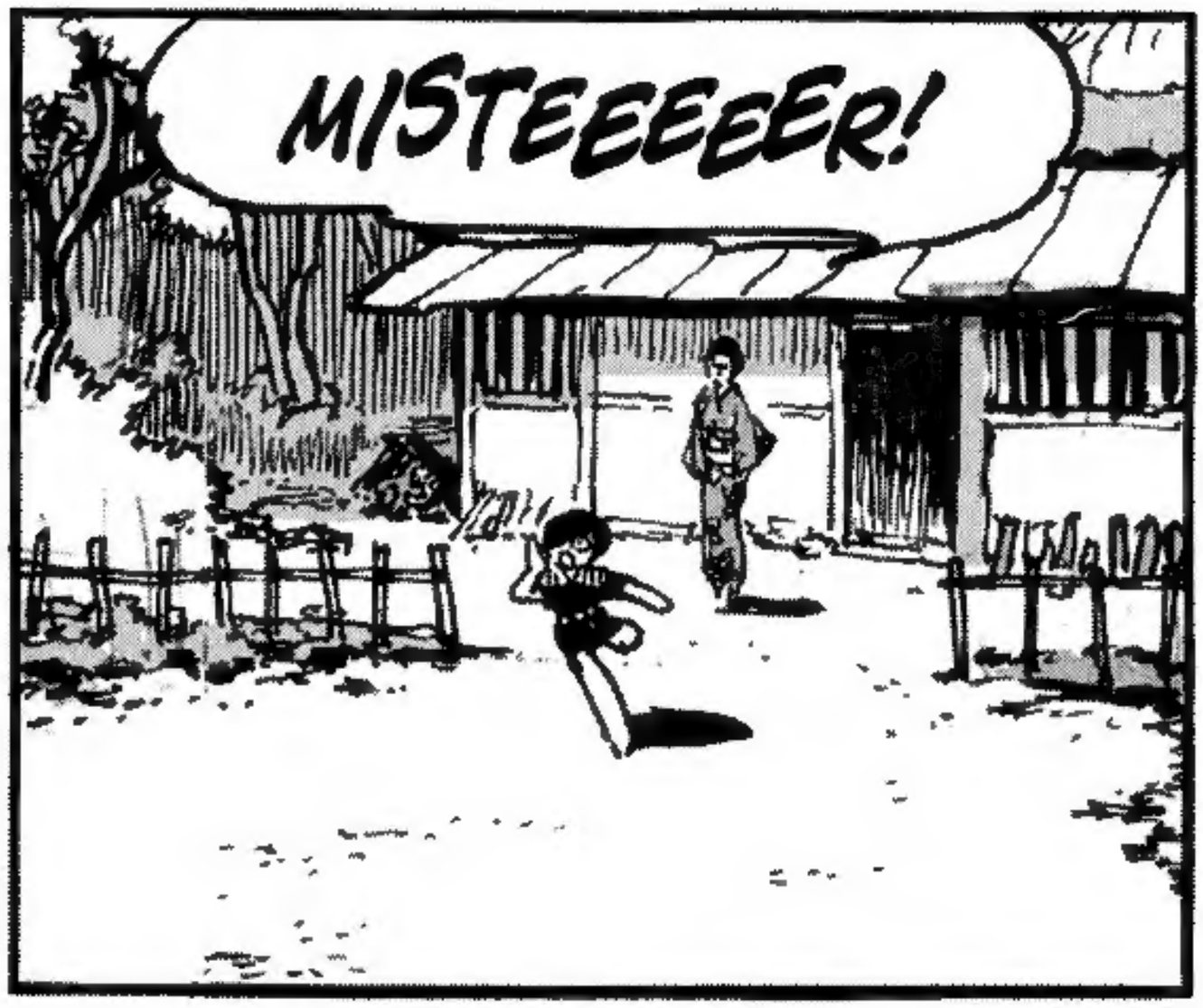
FAREWELL
...
...

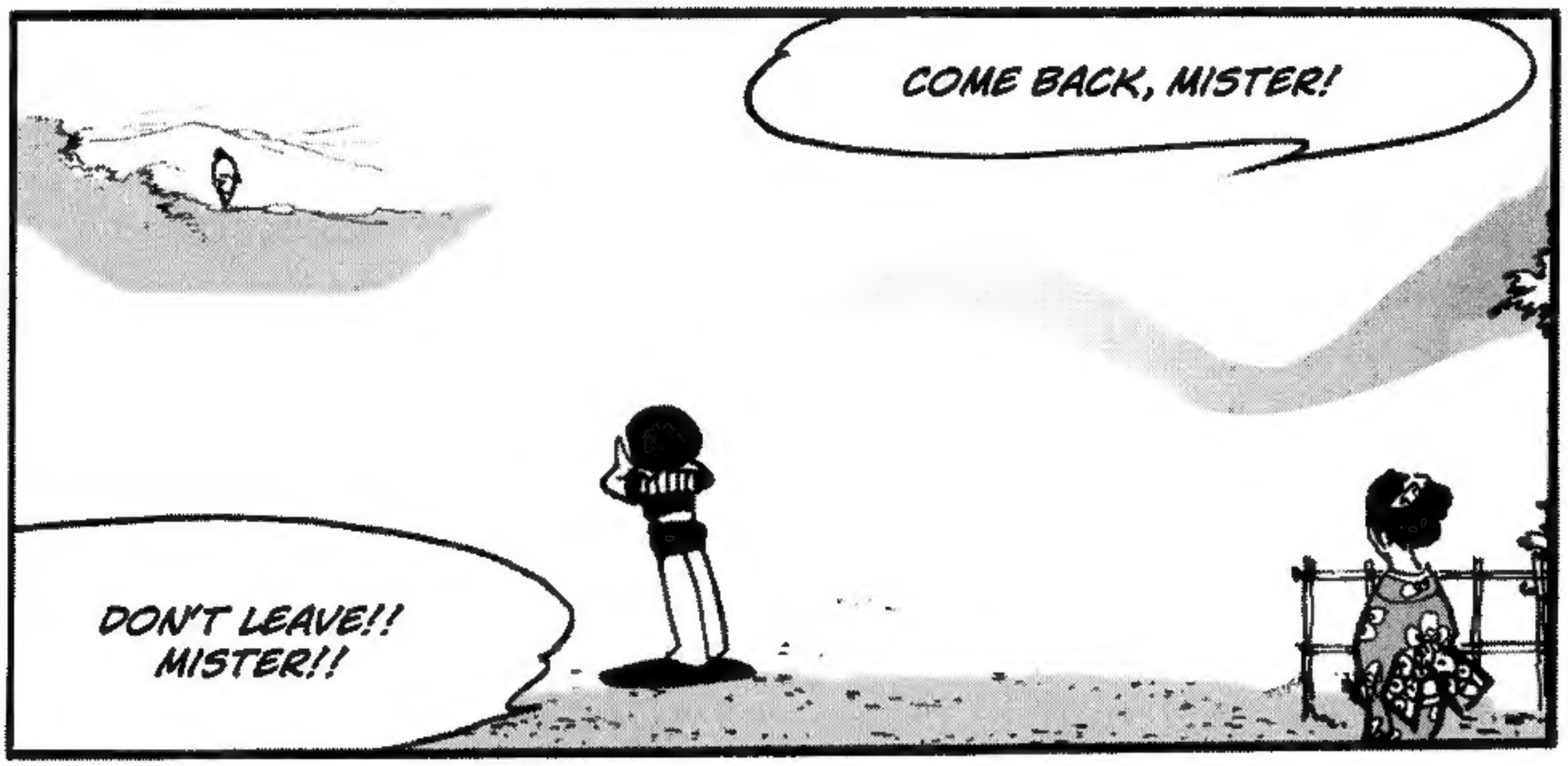
...STAY KNIT TOGETHER, YOU AND YOUR BROTHER!
I WISH YOU GOOD FORTUNE... AND ABOVE ALL...



MISTER!
MISTER!


Ah!




# ZATOICHI'S PILGRIMAGE

-END-

BLACKOUT